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# GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE



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**Roger Bacon** showed the world, for the first time, the importance of scientific observation and experiment. This remarkable man was born at Ilchester in Somerset in 1214. After studying at the University of Oxford, and in Paris and Italy, he eventually returned to Oxford, and became a Franciscan monk in 1251. In an age when "science" was largely synonymous with the alchemists' search for the philosopher's stone and attempts to transmute base metals into gold, Bacon displayed a scientific vision far in advance of his era. He foresaw the possibility of mechanical flight, the use of explosives, the improvement of sight by lenses and the propulsion of ships by engines.

In all his teaching he insisted on the importance of experiment rather than discussion, and on the necessity for first-hand practical experience, particularly of such chemical operations as distillation and calcination. He saw clearly that, without this practical foundation, natural science was little more than a collection of words. One result of his insistence on experiment was to enable him to show that air is necessary to sustain combustion. He has also been credited, but without adequate evidence, with the discovery of gunpowder. Some explosive mixture was undoubtedly known in Western Europe in his time for Bacon complained of the annoyance caused by boys letting off fireworks outside his study. He died on the 11th June, 1292, leaving as his contribution to science a way of thought which still persists all over the world. Roger Bacon, Englishman, may justly be described as the first modern scientist.



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*Editor* *Executive Editor* *Art Editor*  
*Michael Huxley* *Katherine Griffiths* *Harald Hall*

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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. I	MAY 1948
	PAGE
GOLCONDA <i>By Ian Morrison</i>	I
CRANFORD REVISITED <i>By Joan Curl</i>	4
STUDIES IN THE SOUTHERN HEJAZ AND TIHAMA <i>By Wilfred Thesiger, D.S.O.</i>	8
Photogravure Supplement	Facing page 8
ECHOES OF ARCHANGEL <i>By James Morris</i>	9
JAN MAYEN—BIRD ISLE OF THE ARCTIC <i>By A. J. Marshall</i>	21
THE ARAUCANIAN INDIANS <i>By Sir Harry Luke, K.C.M.G., D.Litt.</i>	31
STREET LIFE IN CHINA I. Made for the Children <i>Notes and Photographs by Hedda Morrison</i>	34
NOTES FROM A TIGRIS JOURNAL <i>By Alan Ross</i>	38

*Cover: A Peiping Youngster*  
*Hedda Morrison*

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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 2	JUNE 1948
CANOES ON THE CONGO	PAGE
<i>Notes and Photographs by Merlin Minshall</i>	41
OPERATION "SPOONING" . . . . .	46
BRITISH ARTISTS ABROAD	
IV. Wilson and Turner in Italy	
<i>By Graham Reynolds</i> . . . . .	48
MID-SUMMER FESTIVAL IN SWEDEN	
<i>By J. Allan Cash, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.</i> . . .	54
GEOGRAPHY AND AIR NAVIGATION	
<i>By Flight Lieutenant I. L. Dunn</i> . . . . .	61
ANIMALS IN ART	
V. Egyptian	
<i>By Professor M. E. L. Mallowan</i> . . . . .	71
Photogravure Supplement	Facing page 72
THE GREATEST SCOURGE OF	
ALL TIME	
<i>By René Elvin</i> . . . . .	73
RATS IN LONDON	
<i>By Anthony Barnett</i> . . . . .	77
<i>Cover : Ready for the Festival</i>	
<i>J. Allan Cash</i>	

Editorial Offices: 91 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2 (Tel. Temple Bar 2617). All editorial correspondence to be addressed to the Executive Editor.

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*The Hon. Robert Boyle* was the man who formulated the theory on which all chemical reasoning is based — namely, that an element is the simplest form of matter, and cannot be resolved into other substances. He first stated his theory in a treatise entitled "The Sceptical Chymist", published in 1661. Before that time, scientists had clung to Aristotle's hypothesis, dating back to the fourth century B.C., that the four "elements" were fire, water, earth and air, and that all matter consisted of these in different proportions. Boyle's appreciation of the true nature of an element changed the whole trend of scientific thought.

Son of the Earl of Cork, he was born at Lismore Castle, in Ireland, in 1627. At the age of eight, he was sent to school at Eton. Thence he proceeded to Oxford, and spent much of the rest of his life at the university carrying out scientific work which covered a vast field. Amongst his achievements were the invention of the first efficient air pump, the preparation of methyl alcohol from wood, and the propounding of Boyle's Law, which is still used to describe how the volume of a gas varies with pressure. Before Boyle's time, chemistry was the happy hunting ground of the quack physician and alchemist. His work at Oxford raised it to the status of a dignified branch of natural science. It is not without good reason, therefore, that Robert Boyle is regarded throughout the world as "the father of chemistry".



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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 3	JULY 1948
PELOTE : GAME OF THE BASQUES By Rodney Gallop . . . . .	
NEST-BUILDING IN EAST ANGLIA Notes by E. A. Ellis . . . . .	
UNMAPPED AND UNEXPLORED By F. S. Smythe . . . . .	
THE NILE By Gordon Waterfield . . . . .	
PROVENÇAL SHEEP-DRIVE Photogravure Supplement By Édouard Mouriquand . . . Facing page 112	
POSITANO By William Sansom . . . . .	
NORWAY'S WOOD ARCHITECTURE Notes and Photographs by Rosemary Gilliat . . . . .	

Cover:

Members of the Xhosa Tribe at Port Elizabeth  
E. J. Worth from Associated Press

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## ALICE STUDIES NATURAL HISTORY

*in the school of Lewis Carroll*

"Go on with your list of butterflies," said the Red Queen.

"Well, there's the Small Copper," Alice began.

"Over there," said the Queen, "you'll see a Large Copper — one of the largest in the Force, in fact."

"What does he live on?" Alice asked.



"He'll live on to a ripe old age if he goes on drinking a Guinness a day," said the Queen.

"And there's the Red Admiral," Alice went on, "It's really Red Admirable, you know." She was rather proud of knowing this.

"In my hand," said the Queen, "you will see a Head Admirable. It has an entirely natural history — it is made of nothing but barley, hops and yeast."

"And what does it live on?"

"It lives on top of a Guinness."

"Supposing someone drinks the Guinness."

"Then the Head would be consumed with joy."

"But that must happen very often," Alice remarked thoughtfully.

"It always happens," said the Queen.

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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 4	AUGUST 1948
FOLLOWING THE TYNE	
I. Mouth to Watersmeet <i>By J. Allan Cash, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.</i>	121
KEYNOTES OF CAPE TOWN	
By T. V. Bulpin	128
AN ARCTIC PLAYGROUND	
By Barbara McKechnie	134
ANIMALS IN ART	
VI. American Indian <i>By C. A. Burland, F.R.A.I.</i>	142
CHINESE HARMONY	
By Hedda Morrison	151
Photogravure Supplement	<i>Facing page 152</i>
PASTORAL 'MEIDOBIA'	
By Michael Langley	155

*Cover: A vappus or Lapp guide*

*Dr. Gösta Lundquist*

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thousands of tractors for farms all over the world. On those once desolate Thames-side acres now stands the greatest hive of motor industry in Europe — the Ford Works of Dagenham. The marsh has indeed brought forth a miracle.

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**Sir Isaac Newton** who has been described as the greatest man of science of all time, is best known, to the general public, for his famous observation of the falling apple. This led him to formulate his Laws of Motion, the fundamental laws on which the branch of mathematical physics known as dynamics is based. His achievements in optics and mathematics have obscured his work as a chemist. Newton's contact with chemistry began when he was at school in Grantham, where he lodged with an apothecary. Throughout his life he displayed great interest in the chemistry of metals, much of his work being of a very practical nature, such as the production of alloys for use on the mirrors of the reflecting telescope he designed.

Newton maintained a private chemical laboratory at Trinity College, Cambridge. His principal service to chemistry was his clarification of the "corpuscular" theory of matter. This theory, which held that matter consisted of large numbers of small particles, was applied by Newton to explain the facts he observed while experimenting. Newton was born at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, on Christmas Day, 1642. Entering Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1661, he became Professor of Mathematics in the University at the very early age of twenty-seven. He was appointed Warden of the Royal Mint in 1696, and Master three years later. This great Englishman died in 1727, leaving behind him a reputation which has increased with the passing of the centuries.



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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 5	SEPTEMBER 1948
ANIMALS IN ART	
VII. Indian: Part I By K. de B. Codrington . . . . .	161
A GIRDLE OF EMERALDS	
The Proposed 'United States of Indonesia' By C. A. Thomas . . . . .	168
Photogravure Supplement	
By W. N. Stuifbergen . . . . .	Facing page 168
FOLLOWING THE TYNE	
II. Watersmeet to Sources By J. Allan Cash, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S. . . . .	169
YAKS	
By Lt.-Colonel F.M. Bailey, C.I.E. . . . .	176
SWITZERLAND'S PILGRIMAGE CHURCH	
By J. P. Harthan . . . . .	180
HOW SOME PLANTS SPREAD	
By Dr W. B. Turrill . . . . .	188
SEEN IN BUDAPEST	
Notes and Photographs by Tom L. Blau . . . . .	193

Cover: *Naga Hill-man*

Ralph Keene, by courtesy of the Tea Bureau

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Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 6 OCTOBER 1948

- |  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| EARLY DAYS IN BERMUDA AND<br>THE BAHAMAS. I<br><i>By Edward Lynam, D.Litt.</i>   | 201  |
| ANIMALS IN ART   |      |
| VIII. Indian : Part II<br><i>By K. de B. Codrington</i>  | 208  |
| THE YELLOW RIVER: CHINA'S<br>SORROW ?<br><i>By Sir John Pratt, K.B.E., C.M.G.</i>  |      |
|  | 217  |
| SCOTLAND IN THE ANTIPODES<br><i>By Darry McCarthy.</i>   |      |
|  | 226  |
| ROUND ABOUT GLASTONBURY<br>Photogravure Supplement<br><i>By Desmond Laing . . . Facing page 232</i>  |      |
| THE GEOGRAPHY OF SOARING<br><i>By Jacques Cochemé . . . . 233</i>  |      |
| <i>Cover: Stoney Tribal Chief in full regalia</i><br><i>Nick Morant from Paul Popper</i>   |      |
| Editorial Offices: 91 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2<br>(Tel. Temple Bar 2617). All editorial correspondence to<br>be addressed to the Executive Editor. |      |
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Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 7

NOVEMBER 1948

- |  | PAGE            |
|--|-----------------|
| EARLY DAYS IN BERMUDA AND<br>THE BAHAMAS. II<br><i>By Edward Lynam, D.Litt.</i>  | 241             |
| PEOPLE OF GENADENDAL<br>Photogravure Supplement<br><i>By Anne Fischer</i>  | Facing page 248 |
| MALOH SILVERSMITHS IN<br>SARAWAK<br><i>By Hedda Morrison</i>   | 249             |
| THE MUCH-COURTED KAZAKS<br><i>By Lt.-Colonel N. L. D. McLean, D.S.O.</i>   | 256             |
| A COMPARISON OF CASTLES. III<br><i>By Kay Cannon</i>   | 264             |
| MOOSE FACTORY.<br><i>By Hugh Mackay</i>  | 273             |
| <i>Cover: Chillon Castle, Switzerland</i><br><i>W. Suschitzky</i>  |                 |
| Editorial Offices: 91 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2<br>(Tel. Temple Bar 2617). All editorial correspondence to<br>be addressed to the Executive Editor. |                 |
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Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 8	DECEMBER 1948
GEOGRAPHY AND YOU—AND ME	
<i>By Professor E. G. R. Taylor</i>	PAGE 281
OIL IN THE JUNGLE?	
<i>By Christopher Isherwood</i>	288
THE GEOGRAPHY OF CHRISTMAS CARDS	
<i>By George Buday, A.R.E.</i>	293
THE MAN WHO NAMED AUSTRALIA	
<i>By Commander W. E. May, R.N.</i>	306
SANDS OF THE EMPTY QUARTER	
<i>By Wilfred Thesiger, D.S.O.</i>	312
Photogravure Supplement	Facing page 312
WE PLANNED OURSELVES	
<i>By Sir Stephen Tallents, K.C.M.G., C.B.</i>	313
<i>Cover: Christmas Card of the 1860s</i>	
<i>from the collection of George Buday</i>	

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**Henry Cavendish** first showed the world how water—the most important of all chemical compounds—could be made synthetically. Cavendish discovered that it was composed of the two gases now called oxygen and hydrogen, and in 1784 prepared water by exploding a mixture of them in a glass vessel. The apparatus which he used is still preserved at the University of Manchester. Cavendish was also the first to weigh the Earth and the result he obtained was astonishingly accurate. Cavendish also discovered the composition of nitric acid, and was the first chemist to recognise hydrogen as a definite chemical element. He prepared it by treating zinc with sulphuric acid. He was also the first practical experimenter to find a means of drying a gas, which he accomplished by passing it through pearl ash.

All these discoveries have proved of immense importance. Though both his parents were English, Henry Cavendish was actually born at Nice in 1731. He was educated at the University of Cambridge and from 1760 until his death in 1810 his whole time was devoted to science, and in particular to physics and chemistry. Though he was extremely shy, shunned publicity and never attempted to exploit any of his discoveries, the work of this English chemist has been of great and lasting benefit to science and industry throughout the world.



# THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE

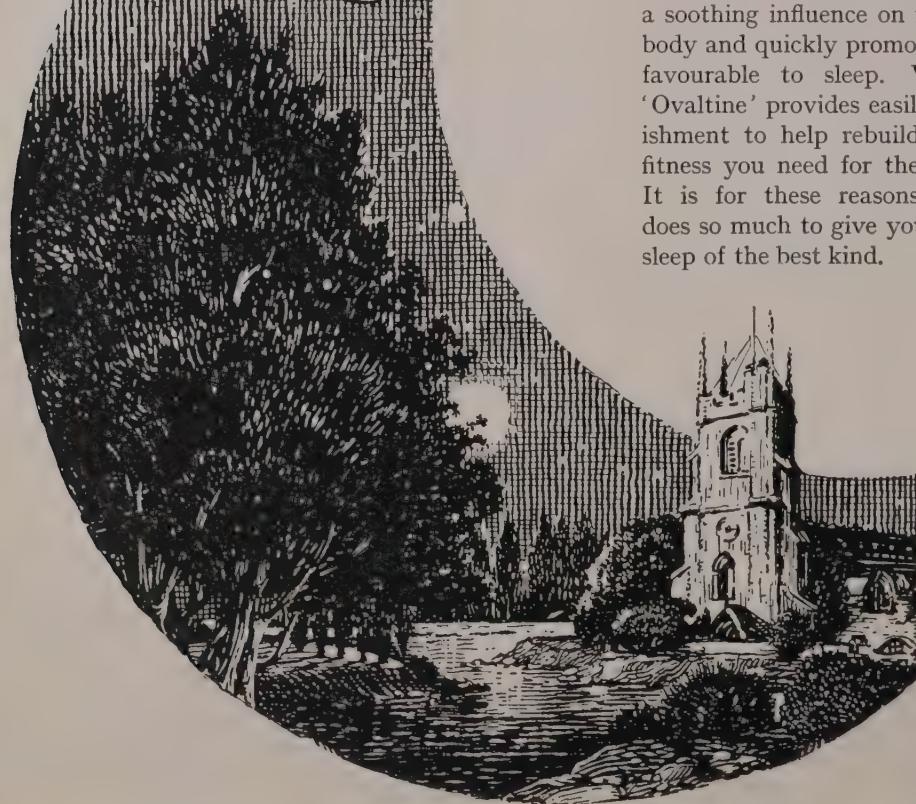
*Editor* *Executive Editor* *Art Editor*  
Michael Huxley Katherine Griffiths Harald Hall

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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 9	JANUARY 1949
MAPS FROM AIR PHOTOGRAPHS	
By T. D. Weatherhead . . . . .	321
THE NORTHERN GREEK FRONTIER	
By Michael Ward . . . . .	329
CORNISH CHINA CLAY	
By Val Doone . . . . .	336
Photogravure Supplement	Facing page 336
HIROSHIMA, 1946	
By Nicolas Furse . . . . .	337
THE MALTA BACKGROUND	
By Paul Redmayne . . . . .	342
FLOWERING CACTI	
Notes by H. R. Fletcher . . . . .	350
LIFE IN SPITSBERGEN	
By Frank Illingworth . . . . .	353
Cover: Ukrainian woman and child	
Hans Leuenberger from Pictorial Press	
Editorial Offices: 91 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2 (Tel. Temple Bar 2617). All editorial correspondence to be addressed to the Executive Editor.	
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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 10	FEBRUARY 1949
WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEAUFORT? <i>Introduction by Jean Doise . . . . .</i>	PAGE 361
<i>Notes and Photographs by Édouard Mouriquand . . . . .</i>	362
AUSTRALIAN SLANG <i>By Sidney J. Baker . . . . .</i>	368
<i>Illustrations by Hal Missingham . . . . .</i>	
BIRD LIFE AT RAVENGLASS <i>By A. F. Park, F.R.P.S. . . . .</i>	375
THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS <i>By Lyn and Richard Harrington . . . . .</i>	383
BRITISH ARTISTS ABROAD <i>V. Roberts in Spain, Egypt and Palestine By Graham Reynolds . . . . .</i>	391
Photogravure Supplement . . . . . Facing page	392
WOLVES OF THE DESERT <i>The Sa'ar Tribe at the Watering Place By Wilfred Thesiger, D.S.O. . . . .</i>	394
<i>Cover: Herring workers in the Hebrides J. Allan Cash</i>	

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*John Dalton*, an English Quaker, was the first to propound the theory that the atom was the smallest particle of matter imaginable—a theory that was not assailed until more than a century later. Even in Dalton's day, the idea that matter was composed of small indivisible particles was not new. A similar theory had been put forward by the Greek philosopher Democritus two thousand years earlier. Sir Isaac Newton had restated it as the "corpuscular theory" a hundred years before Dalton. Where Dalton excelled them was in formulating these theories in a way that explained known chemical processes, and enabled deductions to be made which could be submitted to the test of practical experiment. In short, he translated them from philosophical abstractions into a method for accurately forecasting and controlling chemical reactions and manufacturing processes.

Dalton, the son of a weaver, was born in 1766. He went to work at the age of 12, but studied in his spare time to such effect that in 1793 the Manchester Academy appointed him tutor in mathematics and natural science. Six years later he set himself up as a private teacher, devoting his leisure to research and the fashioning of his Atomic Theory, which was first published in 1808 in his book "A New System of Chemical Philosophy". Dalton's theory, unaltered in its essentials, is still used to explain the laws of chemical combination. Dalton's work was the basis of the knowledge which enabled British scientists to contribute so much to the startling developments of atomic disintegration.



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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. II	MARCH 1949
ANTIQUITY FROM THE AIR	PAGE
<i>By J. K. St Joseph</i>	401
YEOMEN WARDERS OF THE TOWER	
<i>By James Bone, C.H.</i>	408
BASUTOLAND JOURNEY	
<i>By T. V. Bulpin</i>	411
MEXICO'S 'WAY OUT'	
<i>By Kenneth G. Grubb, C.M.G.</i>	418
MEXICAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE	
Photogravure Supplement	
<i>By Dorothy Hosmer</i>	Facing page 424
PALOH PATTERN	
<i>By Hedda Morrison</i>	425
DELACROIX IN MOROCCO	
<i>By Bernard Denvir</i>	433
Cover: Basutoland Scene	
<i>T. V. Bulpin</i>	

Editorial Offices: 91 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2 (Tel. Temple Bar 2617). All editorial correspondence to be addressed to the Executive Editor.

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## Contents

VOL. XXI, NO. 12	APRIL 1949
BRIDPORT BREIDING	PAGE
<i>By Robert Douglas Brown</i>	441
THE CLOUDED SCENE	
<i>By F. S. Smythe</i>	448
Photogravure Supplement	<i>Facing page</i>
HARVEST OF OIL	
I. The Social Impact	
<i>By Kenneth Williams</i>	450
TOMBO AND HIS PEOPLE	
I. A Masai Boyhood	
<i>By Elspeth Huxley</i>	460
WHY GREENLAND?	
<i>By Trevor Lloyd</i>	470
A BOTANIST ON THE AMAZON	
What we owe to Richard Spruce	
<i>By Kenneth G. Grubb, C.M.G.</i>	481
THE WORLD IN BOOKS	
<i>By Ivy Davison</i>	xvii

*Cover: Greenlandic woman and child*

*Paul Hansen, from Grönlands Styrelse*

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mance has made it a popular attraction in a long series of concerts which have contributed considerably to many worthy causes. After its first broadcast, it was immediately invited to broadcast again ; and it has appeared in the Lord Mayor's Show. The Ford Management believes that cultural activities are a vital factor in promoting healthy human relations in industry.

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# Golconda

by IAN MORRISON

A FEW miles to the west of Hyderabad city in central India lies the fort and ruined city of Golconda. Once it was the capital of a large and powerful kingdom of the Deccan. Today, those buildings which are still habitable are used as barracks by troops of the army of His Exalted Highness, the Nizam. But the massive walls and fortifications still remain, crowning a granite ridge, and on a little arid plain near by stand the mausolea of the Qutb Shahi kings. Descended from a Turcoman adventurer who hacked out a kingdom for himself, they ruled in the Deccan from 1512 until 1687 when Golconda was conquered by one of the great Mogul emperors, Aurangzeb, and formally annexed to the Delhi empire. It was another Turcoman adventurer, Asaf Jah, appointed by Aurangzeb to administer the new territory, who eventually revolted against his master and founded what is the modern

state of Hyderabad, the largest and most important state in all India.

What great builders the Mohammedan invaders of India were! Everywhere they have left their mark, with forts like the Purana Kila in Delhi, superb mausolea like the Taj Mahal at Agra, gardens like the Shalimar in Kashmir, elaborate water systems like those which bring water for several miles to the town of Aurangabad in western Hyderabad. It is one of the ironies of the partition of India that so many of the architectural achievements of Mohammedanism in India lie, not in Pakistan, but in India. Small wonder that the Muslims are conscious of a mighty past when everywhere, scattered over the subcontinent, are these physical remains of their greatness. Even today Golconda fort, if defended by resolute men, might be a difficult place to take. The battlemented walls, the bastions



(Above) The walls of Golconda fort, constructed by skilled Mohammedan engineers a few miles to the west of Hyderabad city. Moats and artificial lakes provide added protection along two sides of the fort, which was strongly defended with artillery; a gun-platform is seen in the foreground. (Left) One of the old bronze cannon (which range from about three to twelve feet in length), showing detail of design. The Indians of the Middle Ages were well versed in the use of gunpowder. (Opposite) A massive redoubt which forms part of the elaborate fortifications. The walls follow the contours of a granite ridge, providing a good natural defensive position

and redoubts, are skilfully laid out, the component blocks of masonry often weighing several tons. There are platforms for cannon at regular intervals with excellent prepared fields of fire. The largest of the cannon which remain, still mounted on its platform, is a massive object, over twelve feet long and three feet in diameter at the butt end, a miracle of bronze casting, yet beautifully decorated with formal Islamic designs. There are other cannon of all shapes and sizes, even some mounted on a tripod so that they can point in any direction, up or down and round the compass, like a modern light Ack-Ack gun. One feature of the defences which would be of less use today is the panel of sharpened spikes on the massive door of the main gate, to prevent it being battered down by elephants. During centuries of Indian warfare these animals, heavily clad in steel plates, like mobile fortresses, played much the same role that tanks and armoured fighting vehicles have played in our own day.

The name Golconda has an almost magical ring, like El Dorado. It suggests all the fabulous wealth of the Indies, that dream that for centuries kept its hold on the imagination of men of the West. It is with something of a shock that we learn that Golconda really existed, that it still exists. The diamonds, for which Golconda was especially famous, were cut at Golconda but they were found at mines nearly seventy miles away. Readers of *The Arabian Nights* will remember that there

Sindbad the Sailor watched the inhabitants throw lumps of meat into the mines which giant birds came and picked up with the diamonds sticking to them. Many of the Golconda diamonds are doubtless amongst the treasures of His Exalted Highness, one of the richest men in the world, but the actual mines have now long been exhausted.

As one stands on the walls of Golconda fort and gazes across the surrounding countryside—a somewhat rocky and arid landscape—one wonders how long the uneasy peace in Hyderabad state can be maintained. Who would have thought in April 1947 that the walls of the Purana Kila, the Old Fort in Delhi, behind which the delegates to the Inter-Asian Conference discussed plans for a happier Asia freed from Western rule, would less than a year later be sheltering the Muslim inhabitants of the city from murderous attack? Hyderabad is potentially another Kashmir, with the position of the communities reversed. More than 85 per cent of the state's population is Hindu. The state is entirely surrounded by Indian territory. But the ruler and the ruling caste are Muslims. The administration, the police, the army, are almost exclusively Muslim. In the army are several thousand fanatical Arabs from the Hadramaut who have always formed the Nizam's personal bodyguard. The Nizam is a resolute, often stubborn, autocratic ruler. Neither he nor the hereditary ruling Muslim caste will relinquish their power and prerogatives without a fight.

The Nizam has been following a wait-and-see policy. He has proclaimed his desire to have close and friendly relations with both India and Pakistan, but to throw in his lot with neither for the time being and to remain strictly neutral if the two dominions go to war. He realizes that formal accession to either dominion will precipitate a conflict inside his state. He wants to keep the peace. But events may be too strong for him. The gulf between his Hindu and Muslim subjects is widening all the time. Feelings are becoming more embittered. Only by wise statesmanship and restraint on both sides can a conflagration be avoided.

Golconda may yet again prove to be of more immediate practical use than is normally expected of a great historical monument with a fabulous and legendary past.



# Cranford Revisited

by JOAN CURL

ADMIRERS of Mrs Gaskell always insist that she was too great an artist to reproduce exactly any place or character of her acquaintance. Any similarity is said to be coincidence: the unconscious calling to mind of scenes and people she had known. It is, however, generally agreed that Knutsford, where she spent her early life, was the original of *Cranford*—and, indeed, of similar small towns, under various names, in her other stories.

Mrs Gaskell's novels had a considerable vogue in her lifetime and for some years afterwards—so much so that Knutsford figured on the schedules of many Americans visiting this country—but, as *Cranford* is the only one well known today, it is with 19th-century Knutsford as revealed in *Cranford* that this article is concerned.

The same admirers who emphasize Mrs Gaskell's independence of actual models for her places and people illogically fall into the temptation of identifying as many as possible with buildings standing and persons living in the Knutsford of 1853. Brook House is traditionally pointed out as the residence of the Honourable Mrs Jamieson. The undeniable

fact that “whatever the sun was about, he never shone on the front of that house”, together with the derelict state in which the military left it, make the poor thing look too dejected for words.

Miss Matty's house is said to be the one in “the top street”, looking down the yard of the Royal George. If this is so, the little dining-parlour has become a shop again—the Matty Pharmacy—and this time without any attempt to avoid the “degrading characteristics” of such establishments. To imagine the old house as it once was, you must lift your eyes above the shop-window and the gold lettering. At one of those first-floor windows “the curtain was drawn so as to exclude the dead brick wall of a neighbour's stables, and yet left so as to show every tender leaf of the poplar which was bursting into spring beauty”. Through that window, “although it looked into the principal street of Cranford, the fragrant smell of the neighbouring hayfields came in every now and then, borne by the soft breezes that stirred the dull air of the summer twilight”.

The “Ladies' Seminary, to which all the tradespeople in Cranford sent their daughters” still stands, though it is now a private house. A century earlier it was the home of one Mr Higgins, who lived the life of a gentleman by day and a highwayman by night.

The Heath, or Common, on which Mr Higgins' house conveniently stood, has gradually been encroached upon, though it is still more than spacious enough to hold the Fair, the gipsies' caravans and the thousands of spectators who descend upon Knutsford for the May Queen Festival. In Mrs Gaskell's day, the Heath was unfenced and pastured many geese “that occasionally venture into the gardens if the gates are left open”. She also mentions the Races that were held there until 1873.

A feature of the May Day procession is the sedan-chair in which Mrs Jamieson was conveyed to Miss Barker's card-party, and Miss Matty, through Darkness Lane, to Mrs Forrester's. The chairmen were “shoemakers by day, but when summoned to carry the sedan dressed up in a strange old livery—long greatcoats, with small capes, coeval with the sedan, and similar to the dress of the class in Hogarth's pictures”.

Two of the three inns mentioned in *Cranford*



'Marble Arch' cottages, Knutsford. Was it from one of these that Mrs Forrester borrowed a boy to protect her during *Cranford's* robbery scare?



(Above) The doors of the old lock-up are open today, but one trembles to think of the fearsome characters they might have closed upon had the Cranford ladies' suspicions proved justified during the robbery scare! (Right) No mere piece of silk "to match a gray and black mouseline-de-laine that wanted a new breadth", but a modern dress for this customer



bear their own names, though the George would have been recognizable under any pseudonym. No other could boast the Assembly Room which "had been added to the inn about a hundred years before, by the different county families, who met together there once a month during the winter to dance and play at cards". Alas, in Mrs Gaskell's day "the old room was dingy; the salmon-coloured paint had faded into a drab; great pieces of plaster had chipped off from the white wreaths and festoons on its walls; but still a mouldy odour of aristocracy lingered about the place". Now the room is used for dancing once more, but not the "*menuets de la cour*" that Miss Pole remembered.

The other inn named is the Angel, a dignified foursquare building of the dark red Cheshire brick, with fewer pretensions than the George, but with a good porch, green shutters and clean white paint to every window.

So much for the similarities between 19th-century Cranford and 20th-century Knutsford, which amount to little more than the survival of certain identifiable buildings and

of others which Mrs Gaskell knew but did not introduce into her novel. The "bottom street" is still very attractive, in spite of the intrusion of shop-windows, an appalling row of cottages of the Railway Era, and an Italianate coffee-house and memorial turret to Mrs Gaskell.

The differences are far greater, involving not only the disappearance of some buildings and the erection of a great many more, but also the whole character of the place, its atmosphere, its life, its very *raison d'être*.

Mrs Gaskell's "dear little town" of two parallel streets, connected by many entries, has become (to use a current term) a nucleus for a wide built-up area. First, the railway, "which had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town", brought Manchester businessmen, who put up their big ugly Victorian villas just outside Knutsford. Then a certain architect tried to turn the place into an imitation Italian village, so that your first view of Knutsford, if you come by train from Manchester, is of slender towers and pantiled turrets and dovecots. Later, the motor car

*A private house of Knutsford with a fascinating history: not only was it the "Ladies' Seminary" of Cranford times but also, alas, the 18th-century home of "one Mr Higgins . . . a highwayman by night"*





All photographs by Stewart Bale

At the "top end of the bottom street" is the entrance to Tatton Park, formerly surrounded by railings. Cranford ladies were grateful to the aristocracy "who were so kind as to live near the town"

brought other waves of settlers, whose variegated architecture opened up new districts. It became unfashionable to live in town, as Cranford families had done, so the gracious old houses gradually came down in the world and (with two exceptions) are now offices, shops or storerooms.

The character of the town has changed in other ways. Until the end of the 19th-century it seems to have been (like many another small town) an example of the "balanced community" so much in favour with modern planners. It had its own light industries. Five little cotton-mills stood at the northern end of the "bottom street", while silk-weaving for the Macclesfield mills and cotton-weaving for Manchester was carried on in most of the cottages. All this has gone, and with it Knutsford's independence. The little mills were pulled down (not by Lord Egerton) to improve the entrance to Tatton Park, while home weaving was killed by increasing mechanization. The loss of these industries

caused much distress to Knutsford, and the railway (opened nine years after the publication of *Cranford*) was hailed with joy as a bringer of commerce and trade. (The ladies of *Cranford* abominated both railway and trade, but their views can hardly have been those of the poorer people.)

The green sea of the Cheshire countryside still washes the walls of Knutsford, but the links between town and country are weaker than they used to be. A hundred years ago, many householders kept a cow on the Heath. There was a Cattle Fair in the streets. The Saturday market, now practically extinct, brought many farmers and country people to town.

The "quiet sunny little street" is now thronged with traffic, and aeroplanes roar overhead. Only at night is it possible to imagine yourself in Cranford, and even then the clatter of pattens on the vanished cobbles is drowned by the thunder of the heavy lorries on the old coaching road now called A 50.

# Studies in the Southern Hejaz and Tihama

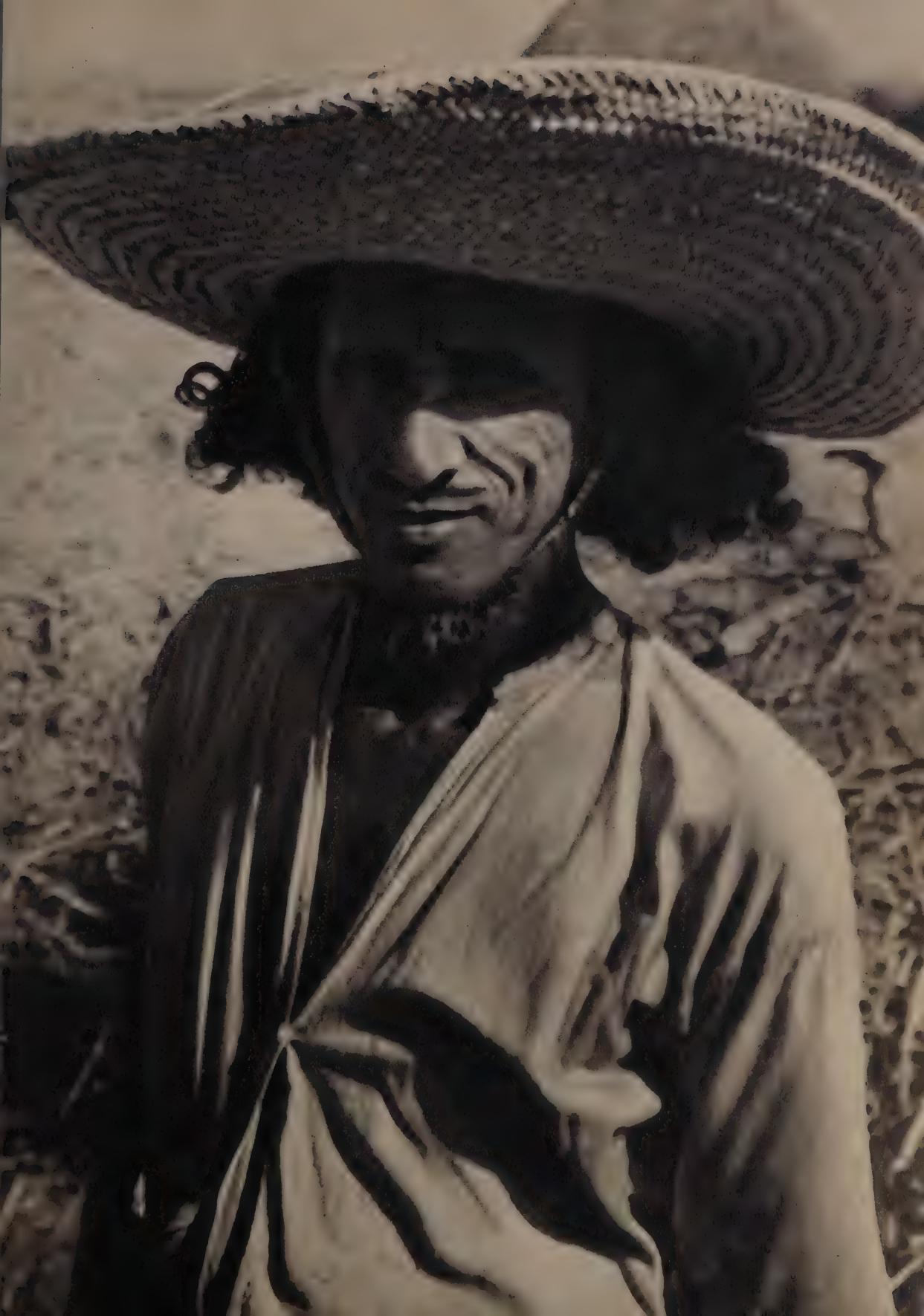
by WILFRED THESIGER, D.S.O.

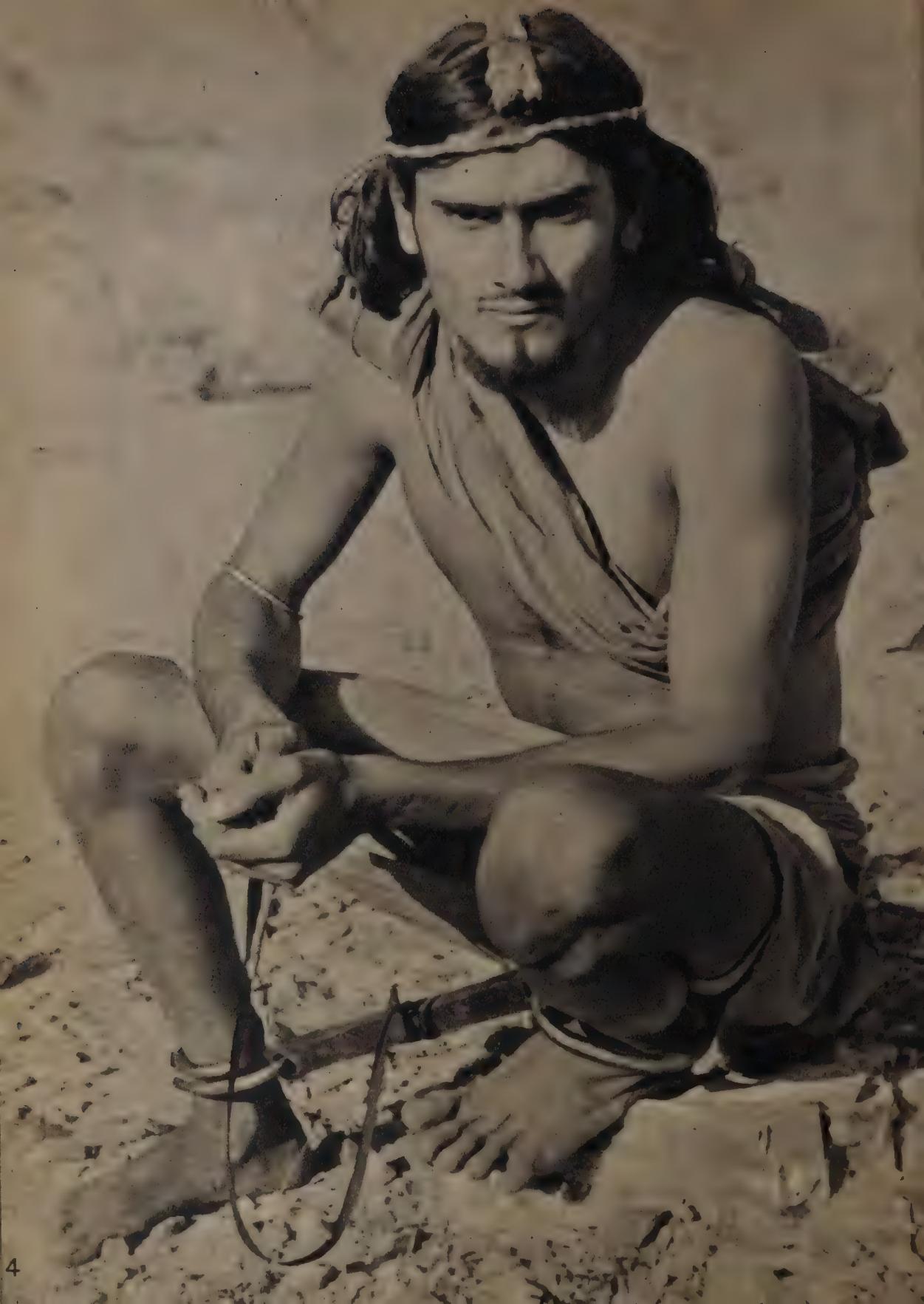
*The following eight photographs were taken in a little-known part of the Hejaz mountains and the coastlands of south-west Arabia by Mr Wilfred Thesiger, whose journeys of 1946 and 1947 have added materially to our knowledge of this region, much of it hitherto almost unvisited by Europeans*

1. A shepherd boy of the Humaidha tribe at Barik in the foothills of the Urdhi between the Hejaz escarpment (9000 feet) and the coastal plain of the Tihama by the Red Sea.
2. The wandering beduin who dwell in the broken country between the coastal plain and the mountains are primarily goatherds; but they also own some sheep, cattle and camels, and cultivate small patches along the wadi banks. The beduin woman is returning, camel stick in hand, from a market in the Tihama, where she has been exchanging butter for grain; her small-brimmed, high-crowned hat is made of stiff straw.
3. In contrast, a broad-brimmed, floppy straw hat is favoured by the older men of Umm al Khashab in the delta of the Wadi Baish where one of the biggest markets in the Tihama near the Yemen frontier is held. A large amount of grain is grown in this area on land irrigated by floods.
4. Near the Yemen border in wild country among sheer-sided mountains and deep valleys on the edge of the high Hejaz mountains lives a section of the large and powerful Qahtan tribe. One of its members is under arrest for animal theft, a crime punishable by amputation of one hand. He is held prisoner at an administrative post where an emir and a few guards keep law and order by the prestige of Ibn Saud's name.
5. The narrow, crowded, many storied houses of Dhahran are made of mud bricks sun-dried and baked in kilns, each house being inhabited by a separate family. Situated in a volcanic area of the Hejaz mountains, at an altitude of 7500 feet, Dhahran is the administrative centre of the Qahtan tribe.
6. Scattered over the high country near Numas on the Hejaz escarpments one finds villages surrounded by terraced cultivation, and inhabited by the Bani Shahr tribe. In the background rises the Jabal Man', a granite mountain. The watch-towers of the fortified villages betoken the condition of insecurity which formerly existed in this region.
7. Among tribesmen of the Numas district the ceremony of circumcision performed on boys from ten to twelve years old is celebrated with feasts to which all-comers are welcomed. On this occasion about one hundred and fifty of the tribesmen were armed with Tower muskets fired with a slow-burning coil of thin rope. Divided into four bands, they surged in rapid and continuous succession into an empty threshing floor, throwing their muskets high into the air and then discharging them in ragged and deafening volleys. Dressed in their full finery and bedecked with silver powder flasks and other trappings, they provided a brave spectacle for the crowds of spectators who watched them from the surrounding walls through clouds of smoke. The initiates were circumcised early next morning.
8. A father and son of the Bal Qarn tribe, which lives in the Hejaz mountains between Numas and Dhafir. Members of this tribe are cultivators, growing wheat and barley in terraced fields on the mountain-sides. They look and dress more like the Arabs of inner Arabia than those of the Tihama.

















# Echoes of Archangel

by JAMES MORRIS

*Mr James Morris served as a Signalman in H.M. Trawler Lord Austin on the Allied convoys to Russia in the years 1942-3. During this period, his duties ashore gave him many opportunities of becoming friendly with the people of Archangel and of studying the architecture there. Mr Morris afterwards served in the Far East, first in Burma and later, as an Admiralty War Artist, in Japan*

THE Arctic sun of July 1942 beamed the brightest welcome to the scarred but unbeaten British convoy P.Q.17 that lay at anchor in the White Sea. Having taken a Russian pilot aboard, H.M. Escort Trawler *Lord Austin*, commanded by Lt. Wathen, R.N.R., justly proud of its part in the convoy, wended its way thirty miles inland up the River North Dvina towards the port of Archangel. All the time we wondered what further surprises lay ahead, little knowing that our ship was to return again the following year, so making a stay that lasted altogether approximately fourteen months.

At first many of us had reason to doubt what hospitality the city might offer, for we well knew that it was suffering from great privations, that food was in short supply, and that it was overcrowded with refugees from war-besieged Leningrad. We were to learn later that what little the Russians had they shared generously with Allied visitors; and many of us found that by using a little philosophy and taking an interest in them we could have a pleasant time. Already we had disproved several popular misconceptions about the environment. For instance, I was very surprised to find the White Sea looking brilliantly red from pigmentation; the many mirage effects that appeared to be ships floating in mid air, and the very mild summer climate. I did not expect to be bitten by swarms of mosquitoes, or see so many large dragon-flies, that breed on the thickly forested shores.

At first the Dvina flows through flat and uninteresting country, broken only by large areas of scrub and marsh, solitary wooden navigating posts and occasional wooden shacks; its dismal aspect reminded me of certain Russian literature. The river twists and turns at very

acute angles, and the ships in line ahead seemed to be taking short cuts across the flat horizon in their impatience to drop anchor; but soon villages made their appearance and the river became a busy thoroughfare.

Along the banks we saw stacks of prepared timber, saw mills, pulp and paper mills, and factories for the tanning and dressing of hides and skins. The small shipbuilding yards were invariably watched over by a large statue of Lenin, and prisoners and Samoyeds or Mongols laboured side by side in enclosures. Near by were large communal dwelling-houses, and a citizens' parachute-jumping tower; past this came soldiers returning to their barracks. It was here that I first heard a Red Army choir. As they tramped along, one soldier sang an opening theme, the others



A. J. Thornton



All illustrations by the author

*The skyline of Archangel, seen from the North Dvina—"attractive in a slightly Oriental way with its whitewashed buildings competing against elaborately carved wooden houses, large red-brick—*

joining in the chorus; and when the song seemed to be finished, they would repeat the performance. Ugly buildings obliterated our view, but their song was heard until our ship carried us out of earshot.

Busy little tugs pulled large rafts of floating logs, to the despair of our pilot. Out-sized barges with extremely long rudders and complete with house and windmills—the latter used for pumping out the water—as well as overcrowded ferry boats, hooted noisily and insisted that theirs was the right of way, although they were often quite wrong, as I was to prove on a later occasion when involved in an exciting midnight collision between two such boats. Amongst the stray logs that lined the bank, children bathed and waved to the ship, while tired-looking Russian women were busy with their soapless washing of clothes, quite oblivious to all around.

Reaching Solombala, the nearest suburb to the city, the Dvina widens and one sees for the first time the skyline of Archangel, attractive in a slightly Oriental way with its whitewashed buildings competing against elabor-

ately carved wooden houses, large red-brick and modern concrete buildings, the most conspicuous being the Bolshoi Theatre, which stands on the site of the old Cathedral. On the south side of the river, at a considerable distance, can be seen the church of Zaostrove, its fourteen green cupolas glistening against the blue sky.

\* \* \*

The town of Archangel was built after the expedition in 1553 of Richard Chancellor, the British navigator, who followed the route of the Norsemen of the 10th century. From Archangel, Chancellor journeyed on to Moscow, and made arrangements for commercial intercourse with Russia. Thus, his expedition became of fundamental importance for the development of English trade. After the founding of St Petersburg (later Lenin-grad) in 1702, Archangel sank into obscurity, but when equal trading facilities were granted in 1762, it gradually recovered. There are still left a few buildings of antiquity, such as the Petrogradski Prison, a long whitewashed building of Byzantine and Renaissance design.



—and modern concrete buildings". River traffic includes "busy little tugs", "out-sized barges . . . complete with house and windmills", an "overcrowded" ferry, a destroyer and British minesweepers

It was once used as a transit camp for political prisoners *en route* to Siberia, and later as a customs house. Near the quayside and almost obscured from view by wharves, etc., is another 18th-century building, probably built for a governor's palace, its central archway and white plastered façade covered with ornament of Byzantine style. This was being used as barracks.

We visited the Bolshoi Theatre and found that it compared favourably with any London theatre for size and possessed a revolving stage, though the seats were not upholstered. Its entertainments were well supported, and one could see opera, drama and folk dancing. I saw a performance of Tschaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin*, and a modern Ukrainian opera, bravely executed to the accompaniment of two grand pianos. Most of the plays had a strong propaganda element; we were helped to understand them by our young Russian friends, who accompanied us and gave a running commentary as the drama unfolded. The films were of a similar nature: apart from a few good historical epics, most of

them were like news-reels which lasted all the evening. One film, obviously directed at the colour bar, dealt with an American circus woman who had a black baby and subsequently found refuge in Russia. No classical ballet was to be seen as I had hoped, but plenty of dancing in the style of Isadora Duncan, who seemed to have created a large following.

Shops were large and commodious, mostly built of concrete that seemed to chip badly with the weather, and in all cases they were destitute of merchandise, for little found its way to the North from the war-ravaged South. So money was of little use and one had to think in terms of chocolate, cigarettes or soap. The disappointed collector could buy if he cared the bust of Stalin, a bicycle-bell or a door-knob. Such articles were plentiful and very proudly displayed. I found that the suburban markets were much more profitable, and if one did not mind becoming the chief object of interest amongst the peasants, small articles of local character could be discovered. Crowds of young boys would gather

around us, eager to barter their attractively coloured and embroidered caps, thus adding to my collection. One little chap returned to me some time later and very tearfully expressed his mother's disapproval for his action; but when I returned the scarlet cap to his little blond head and let him keep the chocolate, he rewarded me with the most disarming and unforgettable smile. This was, no doubt, my best purchase.

The city provided us with two restaurants, one for officers' use; both were well appointed, but the food provided did not appeal to us. The black bread was considered highly nutritious, but we found it most unpalatable. Smoked salmon and caviar was cheap and plentiful, but unsatisfying to the poor *matelot*, who longed for English fish and chips. With meat being avoided there was little else but weak tea and vodka; the latter taken on an empty stomach often proved injurious. Visitors to a Russian home would often be offered a section of raw cabbage, and on several occasions I saw cultured ladies take Brussels sprouts from their handbags and eat them quite publicly as a delicacy. The Russians had their own dining-rooms and communal centres, their particular rank or position dictating their class of dining-room; but no Allied visitors were allowed to enter these places.

The large General Post Office was to be found in the Ulitsa Pavlina Vinogradova, the city's main street. It was my weekly job to dispose of numerous telegrams that were sent to England by the ship's crew. Each one had to be re-read and checked for its destination and this was not a very easy task for the post office assistant; but with her blue eyes and my help we got along famously.

All the principal streets have boarded sidewalks and surface sewers; public newspaper stands; and kiosks selling goats' milk to people in queues waiting to buy milk or bread. In the suburbs the houses become more attractive: they are wooden structures of one story with elaborately hand-carved gables, shutters and double window frames. Window-boxes were often crowded with geraniums—about the only place where flowers seemed to be grown. Most of the houses stood in a small plot of grass, with the inevitable white goat tethered to a stake. *Droshky* carts trundled their way along the rough surface of the streets, the horses wearing the characteristic high horse-shoe-shaped collar that fastened directly onto the wagon shafts. Sights, sounds and often private thoughts were permeated by the music and speech emanating from the communal radio loudspeakers that were placed on all

main street intersections; and although few people seemed to listen, I found it not unpleasant to clop along the wooden sidewalks accompanied by the strains of an invisible 'cello. The communal broadcasting also gave cause for exasperation, for it often got too much in tune with the local telephone system, sometimes resulting in a discordant duet between one's girl friend and a *basso-profundo* from the Moscow Opera.

Ramshackle electric trams rattled by; the amazing fact is that they never seemed to break down in spite of the crowds that would surge onto them. At each stopping place there would be a stampede of peasants, old and young, carrying many bundles, trying to board the tram before others could alight. Those unsuccessful simply hung onto anything that was at hand. Late one evening, rather than foul the ship's quartermaster for being adrift, I found it very necessary to climb through an open window of the last and over-crowded tram; but to my dismay, having got so far, I found that I could not get all my anatomy inside, so I undauntedly travelled several miles with my head resting on a none-too-sweet-smelling market bag and my legs out of the window, joyfully beating time to Tschaikovsky's *Nutcracker* music that floated from the already-mentioned public radio.

\* \* \*

I wanted to make sketches of as many buildings as possible, but this was not an easy task, for such material would soon have been confiscated. Nevertheless, on odd bits of paper, and sometimes in my identity book, I managed to make shorthand notes, and these were subsequently completed whilst cooped up in my ship's bunk, although not without much spilling of ink, and discomfort of the man in the bunk below.

My particular interest was to visit the Archangel churches. There were about five altogether, used as storehouses, schools, meeting halls and museums. The most beautiful was the Byzantine-style church of Zaostrove on the south of the river, consisting of a main chapel with five onion-shaped cupolas in green copper; a smaller detached chapel with nine cupolas, each with chevron-shaped tiles of wood; and a bell tower originally holding eight to twelve bells, though these had been removed by Bolsheviks. To reach this church meant a couple of miles' cross-country walk. A few of the fields were cultivated with cabbages and potatoes, but most of the soil was of poor sawdust quality and reflected very little colour. We found our way barred by a wide stream and had to search for a ferry boat to take us across. We found one that con-



(Above) An 18th-century building with Byzantine-style ornamentation near the quayside of Archangel.  
(Below) Music from loudspeakers accompanies pedestrians and tram-passengers along the main street





By courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

Studies of winter clothing in Archangel, taken from the author's sketch-book



By courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

*Members of a working party of Samoyeds resting in a timber yard were much interested in the British visitors. This race, imported from the north-east, retains many characteristics of Mongol origin*

sisted of a few leaky planks, almost falling apart with age. It was manned by a bewildered, sullen youth of Charon-like appearance and stiff with rheumatics caused by continually sitting in water. It was impossible for us to sit down in the boat, so we crossed the swift-running stream precariously standing with both feet astride the gunwale, the Russian with one hand pulling the oar and the other hand listlessly bailing out the water that rapidly seeped through. The opposite bank reached, we saw for the first time the tranquil little village of Zaostrove, surrounded by birch trees and consisting of little one-storied cottages, raised above ground, with roofs of turf and growing grass. Doorways had carved and covered wooden staircases leading to them, often ornamented with miniature spires. A dun-coloured cow ambled along the wagon-rutted road, goaded on by an old

woman whose legs and feet were thickly bound with strips of cloth taken from old clothes, and her head covered with a white handkerchief tied under her chin. Mother to all around, stood the whitewashed church, stretching her many cupolas above this small Petrouchka-land with an air of faded importance.

We entered the egg-shaped churchyard, but found the building to be locked, which meant that we had to seek the caretaker's cottage and ask for the key. We could not speak their language but by gesticulations we conveyed our wish. They were an elderly couple and cordially invited us to enter their home. It had two rooms; in one corner was a built-in stove of German style, and the furniture was sparse but spotlessly clean. On the table was placed the large silver key which was to allow us entry to the church. Although no mutually

intelligible word was spoken between us, they seemed very happy to entertain us as best they could with bovine smiles and a saucer of weak tea from their beloved samovar, perhaps their most prized possession. Then we were directed on our way.

Opening the large green doors proved an exciting moment, for we immediately found ourselves at the foot of a long flight of white-washed steps that mysteriously disappeared into the main upper chapel. It revealed the most riotously frescoed walls that I had ever seen. From skirting to roof the walls were congested with brightly painted saints, martyrs and celestial choirs that, to my irreverent mind, seemed reminiscent of backstage opera rather than a church. Suspended from the dome was a large and very beautiful chandelier and many silver candelabras were placed around the base of the four main columns that supported the roof. On the

walls hung valuable carved and painted icons and sacred symbols with gold and mosaic ornaments, often draped with scarf-shaped embroideries placed there by devout peasants. Steps led to the altar platform guarded by two full-size silver angels and screened by double gates; and above was suspended a sun-ray ornament with the head of Christ in its centre. Placed around the walls were cupboards fitted with thickly brocaded vestments. Descending to the crypt, we found it to be simpler but similar in design, for this, I believe, was used by the peasants in the Tsarist days.

In none of the churches visited did we encounter any worshippers; and all were locked, with windows barred. Religion seemed to be a private matter, and although no one was prevented from attending church, all our young friends were reticent about accepting our invitations to join us and become

*The caretaker and his wife entertained their British guests "with bovine smiles and a saucer of weak tea from their beloved samovar" when the latter called to borrow the large silver key of—*



By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum



—Zaostrovo church, south of Archangel. “Mother to all around, stood the whitewashed church, stretching her many cupolas above this small Petrouchka-land with an air of faded importance”

our guides, so we always went alone. But this was in 1943, and later in that same year the Russian Orthodox Church was recognized as an official body by the State.

\* \* \*

In addition to the refugees from Leningrad, Archangel was, at this time, a home for thousands who had wandered from the South. Many of them were of the respected gipsy stock, and although they lived frugally they were hardy, sensitive and cheerful and particularly responsive to music and dance. But we soon realized that care had to be taken not to embarrass them, for they were carefully watched by members of the oGPU. This not-so-secret police force seemed endowed with much authority, and so was to be well avoided. But our friends were often intimidated by their neighbours, and it was not uncommon for them to be spied upon and reported for fraternization with us. This resulted in their removal from the district to work elsewhere.

Frequent gifts of chocolate or cigarettes were presented to them, but these were never consumed in our presence. We did not mind,

because we knew that these articles were either shared amongst their families or sent to the fighting soldiers.

Therefore it was not surprising that the average Russian was reticent about talking politics. However, there were some opportunities for discussion, from which it was quite evident that they had been ill informed by their press, for they were often guilty of taking undue credit for Allied victories.

They confessed that they did not understand the slowness of British politics, and thought our methods were hypocritical. I was privately curious about the photographs that I had seen in the Archangel Museum, the captured British tank and the monument that stood near the river commemorating the Soviet soldiers who were killed by the British at the end of World War I. If there were faults on both sides, then it is not for me to express an opinion.

Even so they expressed much goodwill and admiration for our country, and it was abundantly clear that the sooner our historical misunderstanding of each other is displaced by a closer understanding, then the



(Opposite) *The interior of Zaostrove church. "It revealed the most riotously frescoed walls that I had ever seen. . . . Suspended from the dome was a large and very beautiful chandelier and many silver candelabras were placed around the base of the four main columns. . . . Steps led to the altar platform guarded by two full-sized silver angels and screened by double gates."* (Right) *A church in the Solombala district; its architecture, of a much later period, shows signs of Western influence*



quicker the world will right itself. The Americans were received with the same respect as ourselves, and in return contributed generously, although I do not think that they were kindly disposed to such Spartan surroundings; and this was but natural, for *en route* to Archangel they had suffered great loss of personal property.

Many Russian women worked and fought by the side of their soldiers, but most of them worked on the home front according to their particular abilities. They were usually divided into two classes: the strong peasant girl would work in the timber yards or coal dumps and even trimmed our ships' bunkers and did almost every kind of heavy labour. Other women worked in administrative and educational jobs, and were usually better dressed, although they all managed somehow to keep their feminine charm. Sometimes it was quite disconcerting to meet the attractive

dancing partner of the previous evening, now policing the road traffic with firm command.

Older people and even students had to collect wood for heating public buildings during the winter months; and younger folk were sent on compulsory holidays to the northern islands to collect birds' eggs, etc., to help out the nation's larder.

The International Club was, perhaps, our brightest spot, where for some of us the day began and ended. Its hostess, Dr Rita Wright, a Moscow pathologist, was a charming woman, who would often introduce us to visiting celebrities and arrange a visit to the home of some particular poet or painter. Although the doctor had never left her native country, she spoke flawless English, an accomplishment that Russians seem to acquire much better than most Europeans. They were very anxious to learn about our cities, especially how the London 'blitz' compared with that of



By courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

The author and a friend entertain Russian soldiers in an Archangel hospital with a 'Cossack' dance

some of their cities, and were curious to hear our impressions of themselves. Regarding English literature they were already well informed. The discussions often finished late and we would depart with some token such as a signed sketch by the artist concerned.

The Club had quite a good concert-hall, dance-hall and cinema; the choirs of the Red Navy and many Moscow artists or Stalin Prize-winners would sing for us and Karelian-Finnish ensembles would dance in their national dress. By way of comparison we added our own amateur talent to these concerts that were enjoyed by all. British sailors sang and thumped *balalaikas* and the Americans contributed by yodelling "Hill-Billies". The Russians sponsored their own amateur groups of folk dancers; with costumes borrowed from the Opera House they would give us a weekly concert. One day while watching them at rehearsal, a British soldier and I were playfully challenged to join them. We bravely accepted their invitation to make clowns of ourselves, but to their surprise our stiff British legs stood the test so well that before long we

found ourselves permanent members of their troupe, though not without resultant damage to our knees and footwear.

My particular *tour de force*, named the "Corsair Lizginka", was mainly a solo dance accompanied by a choir. The dance was based very much on a squatting posture alternating with rapid whirls and circles of the stage. The technical excellence of my performance must have left much to be desired, but who minded? I certainly did not. The Russians were charming enough to be interested in my effort; so with sweat pouring down my now crimson face, and with unwanted complexes to the wind, I danced as no Tartar ever danced.

\* \* \*

Our stay was drawing to its close and the date of secret departure fixed. Early one morning, as ice crept around the ship, we joyfully slipped out of harbour for our homeward journey. But before the city faded from sight I, who had had a happy time, threw a handful of *kopeks* into the river, bidding farewell to Archangel.



Kodachrome by A. J. Marshall

*Jan Mayen boasts one of the world's largest volcanic craters—the Beerenberg, or 'Bear Mountain'*

# Jan Mayen—Bird Isle of the Arctic

by A. J. MARSHALL

*The Oxford University Exploration Club's 1947 expedition to Jan Mayen Island was the first post-war Arctic expedition from the United Kingdom and the first partially to be subsidized by the Geographical Magazine Trust Fund, to which the founders of the Magazine undertook to assign one half of all profits distributed by way of dividend or bonus. Mr Marshall led the expedition*

TAKE a chart of the Greenland Sea and you will see a tiny dot about 300 miles above Iceland. The dot represents Jan Mayen, a thirty-five-mile-long chain of extinct volcanoes and craggy bird-cliffs which rise precipitously out of the misty Arctic basin. Like Bear Island further north, Jan Mayen is sometimes called 'the fog's home', for in its neighbourhood warm and cold sea currents meet to form a condensation which often makes for hundreds of square miles of almost impenetrable mist. At the north-west end of

the island warm ocean air-currents meet the icy slopes of the 8000-foot Beerenberg crater, and this too creates secondary fog effects. So it is that one may sail on dead reckoning and come dangerously close to the island before the Beerenberg's white bulk looms eerily out of the mists ahead.

It was in this way that members of last summer's Oxford University Expedition first saw Jan Mayen. We were twelve strong—eight scientists, a surgeon, and a documentary film unit under the direction of



Kodachrome by Francis Huxley

*Jan Mayen is composed chiefly of extinct volcanic craters and lava flows mingled with cinders and dust. (Above) The North Lagoon, cradled in this stark valley, is fed by snow-water from the Beerenberg. (Below) A portly glaucous gull surveying Mary Muss Bay, beyond which rises the Vogelberg*



Kodachrome by Francis Huxley



Kodachrome by Francis Huxley

(Above) The Vogelberg, or 'Bird Mountain'. Sailing close, one can see innumerable sea-fowl clinging to its precipitous crumbling sides. (Below) A giant-sized ash-heap! The Greenland Sea is remorselessly eating it away from below, while water seepage from above causes frequent landslides



Kodachrome by Francis Huxley



Lush vegetation clings to the Jan Mayen cliff-sides, enriched with bird droppings and watered by seepage; the seepage also liberates from the rocks essential elements which the plants utilize for their growth. This cliff (left) is the home of the fulmar petrel, the 'sea-horse' of the Norwegian fisher-folk who know the island best. Although the fulmar lays only a single egg it is by far the commonest bird in the Arctic

chromes by A. J. Marshall

A young fulmar waiting patiently for the meal of plankton (floating life) that its parents are collecting from the sea below. The nestling shows up clearly against a background of red decomposed lava, but its only enemy, the slinking Arctic fox, cannot reach it—unless it falls to the beach. When this happens, as it frequently does, the vomiting of oil, which is the chick's sole defence, proves inadequate to deter its foe



Guy Blanchard. Our ship, the celebrated Norwegian sealer *Polarbjørn* ('Polarbear'), ran into sea-fog while still two days off the island. We had left Aalesund in blazing sunlight, and had lounged and worked on the decks clad in light shirts and shorts. Then, suddenly—the fog. The sea temperature dropped by several degrees as we entered the cold current and we were not to see a star again for the rest of the summer; nor, except on half a dozen occasions, the sun.

Although Jan Mayen is 'The Devil's Island' of the blue-eyed Norwegian seal-catchers, it is a fair isle of the Arctic for the hundreds of thousands of fulmar petrels, glaucous gulls, kittiwakes, auks, guillemots, 'sea-swallows' and other birds which haunt its coasts each summer. As we slowly passed the big bifurcated Weyprecht Glacier which cascades seawards out of a gap in the lip of the Beerenberg, we sailed through a sea of feeding birds. As a frequent traveller in the tropics I was accustomed to prolific, not to say teeming, animal life; but nowhere in the tropics had I seen one-tenth as many birds. They swarmed on the water and wheeled in hundreds around our ship: high overhead there were seemingly endless rows of them dotting the laval cliffs, white breasts towards the sea. As we hove to off the North Lagoon, we could see more birds—great nomadic flocks of glaucous gulls and kittiwakes which rested on its surface, or perched in clouds on the black volcanic slopes to shelter from the glacier winds that swept down off the mountain.

Birds and rocks and the mist—they were our first composite picture of Jan Mayen. Later, when we landed, we were to find that the place was not nearly so barren as it had seemed: that in some spots vegetation grew lushly as in an English meadow. We were to see, too, that the ocean swarmed with a rich harvest of marine life on which the birds depended for their living. But, meanwhile, from the deck of the *Polarbjørn* the only sign of plant life was a faint yellow-green tracery of mosses and lichens dappling the faraway cliffs.

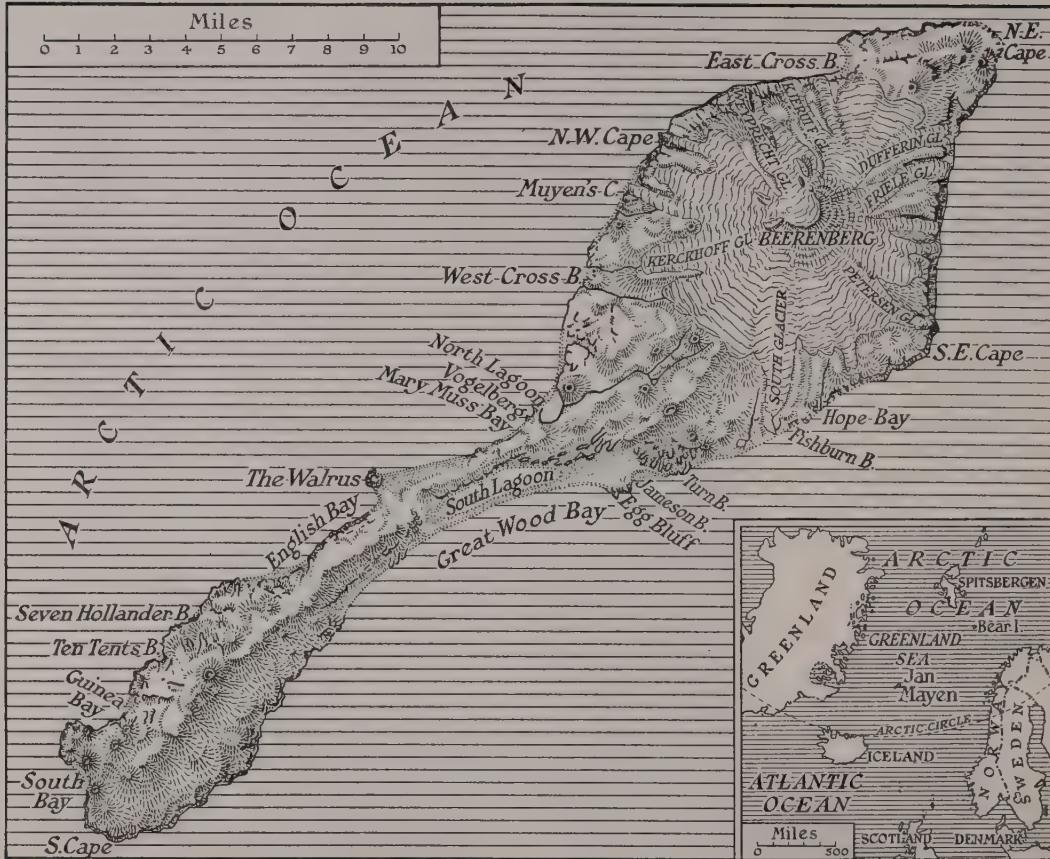
We landed in a flat calm, which surprised us, for Jan Mayen, even in the summer-time, is notorious for the tempests which sweep its shores. Once ashore, we were lucky in that we found more or less intact a group of huts which had been occupied by the Norwegian garrison that defended the radar and meteorological station there during the war years. In these huts we quickly settled, converting them into laboratories, sleeping quarters and a cook-hut; then we set a cook-roster and began to look around.

The interior of the island was nearly barren of birds. True, we heard odd pipits in the mists and found wader tracks imprinting the mud of lonely tarns and lochs which are pocketed in the hills. On trips inland we sometimes—not often—saw a flutter of white as a snow-bunting flitted low across the gaunt lava at our clattering approach. But in general birds were restricted to the ocean, the sea-cliffs and the lagoons which skirted the shore. Species which cannot naturally find a home in these places do not stay on Jan Mayen—or, if they stay, they die. We saw several dead snipe lying about the dry watercourses in the valleys. These migratory birds, which are 'accidental' to near-by Greenland, had somehow missed their mark last spring and made landfall on Jan Mayen, where, in the absence of a congenial marsh, they perished miserably.

On examining the few accounts written by travellers to Jan Mayen in the past, one is surprised at the diversity of the birds which have been seen there. Often, however, those recorded have been dead ones. Robins, blackbirds, swallows, and other 'temperate' birds have been seen from time to time, but none has found this austere environment, with its complete lack of trees, a suitable one in which to make a home.

Clearly then, one could not understand the bird ecology of the island without a keen appreciation of the factors—physical and biological—which other members of our party were studying. Avrion Mitchison, with his lake- and sea-dredging apparatus, was as interested in the contents of bird-guts as was Francis Huxley, the ornithologist. Again, Huxley was interested in anything that Mitchison could tell him about the relative distribution of the sea-creatures on which the birds fed. The rare land-birds were insectivorous, so the work of the entomologist, Amyan MacFadyen, linked up too; and, in turn, the birds had their own profound effect on vegetation growth, so the work of the botanist, J. W. Wilson, was also closely knit in the general scheme. We were soon to find, too, that geology and birds marched, so to speak, hand in hand. Each sea-bird had a favourite kind of cliff on which to lay its eggs. Its breeding site of today is determined by events of thousands of years ago!

The work of our botanist suggested that on Jan Mayen, however, the influence of bird-droppings on plant-growth is not nearly as profound as many people have thought. In some places where there were few or no bird-colonies the erosion of volcanic rock had released enough of its mineral constituents to stimulate a plant-growth which looked more



A. J. Thornton

like Devon than the Arctic. There was, of course, always a flourishing growth under the bird cliffs as well. In some damp patches, such familiar plants as dandelions, buttercups and bilberries grew profusely and in various spots at least six species of saxifrages made a colourful show. Mosses and lichens were everywhere. The latter clung to bleak, windswept rocks within one thousand feet of the top of the Beerenberg. The mosses made a spongy, tawny carpet nearly a foot deep on the approaches to the mountain's permanent snowfield.

Wilson and MacFadyen made up a highly active and mobile team of their own. They analysed the soil and its constituents in detail, and found that soil bacteria, which break down waste organic matter to a form suitable for use by plants, varied from an average of only two bacteria per gramme of soil in desert parts of the island to a great population of 100,000 per gramme where vegetation was richest. Near some of the huts occupied during the war the count rose to 25,000,000 bacteria per gramme of soil!

Insects such as we are familiar with in

temperate zones (and on which most birds feed) are rare on Jan Mayen; so MacFadyen's interests lay mainly with minute springtails, which abound throughout the Arctic, and with spiders and mites, which swarm everywhere. He set up eighty soil-sampling stations at different spots, and with a special tool collected small cores of earth which were taken to the laboratory for treatment. By an ingenious modification of the Berlese funnel apparatus, the insects were driven by heat from the earth samples into alcohol tubes where they were permanently preserved for later study at Oxford. Further soil samples were investigated to determine moisture content, mechanical composition, humus content and so on. It will be several years before the work is finally finished.

Soon the influence of birds on smaller life had become obvious to us. Under the cliffs, in soil enriched by droppings, more than 300 springtails and many nematode worms could be found in a single square inch of soil. Away from the influence of birds the numbers dropped by about one-half, but even in the most barren spots the earth always supported

life of some kind—showing well how nature abhors a vacuum; if it is possible to colonize the tiniest, bleakest niche, then life of some sort will find its way there.

Huxley soon learned that in order to find out where any particular species of bird was nesting he had only to look for a certain kind of cliff. For, although Jan Mayen is wholly volcanic, the cliffs vary greatly in form, and the different kinds of birds are usually rigidly conservative in their choice of nesting places.

Therefore the geologists, Dr A. J. T. Dollar, David Boyd and R. C. Bostrom, over-busy already with their own work of surveying glaciers and collecting specimens of the interesting geologically 'recent' rock-types of Jan Mayen, found themselves bombarded with questions by the biologists, who were eager to correlate their work with the physical pattern of the environment. What was the explanation of those curious layers of friable red rock on which the fulmars chose to lay their single large white egg? Why did more pinnacles, suitable for the portly, glistening glaucous gull, occur towards the southern end of the island, affecting the distribution of breeding pairs? Rock fragments were found

in the crops of certain nomadic birds. Were the rocks native to the island, or did they indicate that this or that particular non-breeding flock had just arrived from Greenland or elsewhere?

We learned that the layered cliffs the fulmars liked had been laid down in successive laval flows, one atop the next, and that the ledging was the result of differential weathering over the years. The fulmars' silvery-grey plumage always showed up beautifully on the ruddy weathered ledges. The geologists said that the red stuff was a vesicular or bubbly variety of trachybasalt. The redness was plain rust: the iron in the successive laval flows had oxidized and given rise to serried ledges, each separated by a solid swathe of black unyielding lava in between. So we had an outline of the physical and chemical processes begun thousands of years ago which give the silvery fulmar its home today.

Our favourite place for birds was the aptly named Vogelberg—the 'Bird Mountain' of the Austrian Arctic Expedition of 1882-3. Here five species nested, about one thousand pairs strong. The fulmars dotted almost all available ledge-space, forcing kittiwakes and

*Across Jan Mayen's North Lagoon on the opposite cliff crouches Sphinx Rock, a curious formation on which dozens of petrels breed. In the foreground the film director records his latest sequence*

*All monochrome photographs by courtesy of G-B Instructional*





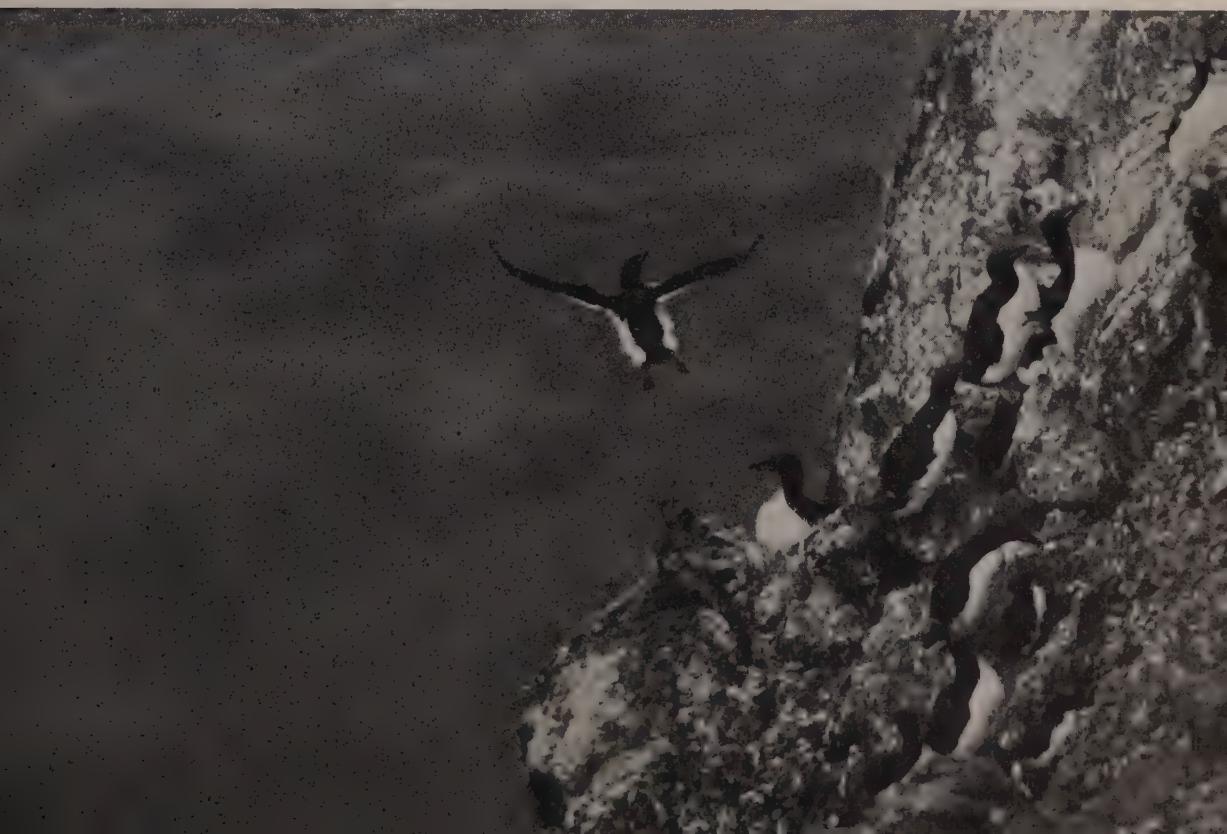
The little auk is probably the best known bird of the widespread auk family. It is a famous diver and the one here shown, caught after a fishing expedition, has a beak full of marine organisms for its young high up in a cranny of the cliffs. Though quite a small bird, the little auk digs and burrows holes as deep as three feet under the ash and lava of the cliff-sides in which to breed

A ringed plover calls in on its way to North-east Greenland, where it breeds. In May, during the northward journey, and in September, when southbound, large numbers of these dainty birds can be heard piping by the misty lake-shore. A few remain on Jan Mayen throughout the summer, but do not breed there. The plover's 'quiet' colouring makes even a large flock difficult to see from near by





(Above, left) Fulmars, the most graceful of birds, flew fearlessly to within a few feet of the camera lens.  
(Above, right) In defence of its young, an anxious parent glaucous gull prepares to 'dive-bomb' an intruder.  
(Below) Brünnich's guillemots guard their chicks on a ledge in the sheer cliff-face seventy feet above the sea



Brünnich's guillemots to nest on precarious projections elsewhere. A few puffins and five pairs of glaucous gulls, secure on almost inaccessible stacks, completed the population. Norwegian seal-catchers say that the first bird to return to the Arctic islands is always the fulmar petrel, and so it probably gets the first choice in nest-sites. The predatory Arctic fox, slinking along under the cliffs on the look-out for a low nest or a fallen nestling, is a second limiting factor in nest-site availability. Kittiwakes, for example, nest on scree-slopes and other accessible situations in parts of their range where foxes do not occur. On Jan Mayen their nests were incredibly difficult to reach.

Three kinds of birds did in fact build on the ground—the eider, the Arctic skua and the Arctic tern or 'sea-swallow'. The eider nested successfully beside a small freshwater pool at lonely Guinea Bay; a great flotilla of old birds and sooty-coloured young ones swam in line out to sea when we appeared silhouetted over the cliffs behind their lagoon. Other travellers' accounts suggest that a single eider nesting often falls prey to the fox; at Guinea Bay these birds found safety in numbers.

The two small ground-breeders each have a protective device which apparently enables them to defend their eggs and young from foxes. We found one skua chick—a sooty-black fellow with pale-blue legs and dark-red blood-vessels showing in the webs of his feet. He was only about four inches in length, and on our approach vomited at us a fish quite as long as himself—more in fright than in anger, we liked to think. Near by was a big skua-hummock, over three feet high, the accumulation of countless years' bird-droppings and the resultant mossy growth. On and about this hummock, and at every point of the compass, cavorted the parent skua, raising her wings conspicuously, bobbing her head, bleating loudly. To make her happy we followed her after we had finished examining the chick. She made off over the dismal, craggy tundra, finally rising into the air after 'luring' us for a safe distance. We hoped that later canine visitors would react in the same manner as ourselves.

With regard to the slim, silvery, red-beaked Arctic tern, every one of us could soon testify as to its efficiency in attacking intruders into its nesting colony: it dive-bombs them. These terns nested about forty strong among the Siberian drift-timber that litters the Jan Mayen beaches. The eggs are mottled and do not very closely match the sand on which they lie. Whenever we approached anywhere near we were assailed by screeching terns, pecking viciously with beaks strong

enough to part one's hair, and sharp enough to draw blood. We felt that any fox that visited the 'sea-swallows' would be lucky if it escaped with its life!

Previous expeditions to the Arctic have brought back accounts of the curious phenomenon of 'non-breeding'. Many people have noted that great flocks of birds periodically skip a season and spend the whole summer fishing and sunning themselves instead of getting on with the complicated pattern of events which leads to successful reproduction. To study this curious non-breeding in the field and to bring back a collection of endocrine glands for later histochemical investigation in the laboratory was my chief preoccupation.

Migratory wading birds such as the knot, ringed plover and turnstone use Jan Mayen as a halting place on the spring flight from the south, and occasionally stay the summer, but apparently never breed there. This is hard to understand, but evidently something demanded by the migrants for the successful sequence of breeding events is lacking in the island environment. Reproduction in wild animals, and more especially in birds, entails a complex pattern of preliminary behaviour which culminates (if environmental stimuli are suited to the birds' requirements) in a synchronous physiological condition in each sex whereby they are able to reproduce. If the environment is not 'just right', birds (as every aviculturalist knows) often will not breed. On Jan Mayen we found great flocks of kittiwakes and glaucous gulls basking replete on the lagoons and sand-pits while a few hundred yards away their fellows were sitting on eggs or feeding chicks. Laboratory examination has shown that the non-breeding birds did, in fact, reach a physiological state apparently identical with that of the birds which bred, and that it was probably a lack of essential environmental stimuli, such as suitable fox-proof pinnacles for glaucous gulls and open lonely vistas of tundra for skuas, which caused suppression of the final events in the breeding cycle. Since coming home, too, we have found in the laboratory that if a bird fails to breed within a certain period the male reproductive organs lose their secretory activity and breeding that year is no longer possible. In the Arctic, birds which have already bred quickly pass over into an inactive physiological phase. If one considers this finding in relation to the precarious Arctic environment, it will be realized that such physiological suppression has great advantages; for it ensures that parents, instead of having to tend a second brood, will be free to fly southwards before the icy autumn weather comes down the Arctic basin.



Sir Harry Luke

*Osorno Volcano from Lake Todos los Santos, Southern Araucania*

# The Araucanian Indians

by SIR HARRY LUKE, K.C.M.G., D.Litt.

"SOME days after I had made Planchu's acquaintance", wrote Orélie Antoine I, King of Araucania, about 1868 of his newly appointed Minister of State, "he invited me to dinner. The meal passed off without incident; I was his guest. None the less, I remarked that, when dispensing the various dishes, he retained the best pieces for himself, especially in the case of a roast fowl, of which he served me with the leg while himself keeping the wing. 'Here is a Minister', I said to myself, 'who is far from treating me as a King.' "

Who was this monarch with so discourteous a Minister; how came he to call himself the King of Araucania; who and where were his subjects?

Orélie Antoine de Tounens was a lawyer of Périgueux born in 1825, one of several 19th-century Frenchmen who tried without success to follow in the footsteps of Rajah Brooke by setting themselves up as rulers of territories

that were either a political no-man's-land or were only partially controlled by the states within whose boundaries they lay. Among his confrères, the King of the Sedangs, the Prince of Trinidad, the President of the Free State of Counani and the somewhat later Emperor of the Sahara, Orllie de Tounens was conspicuous for combining serious purpose and the patriotic ambition to serve France with an optimism not always tempered by realism. But if there was just an element of *opéra bouffe* about his Araucanian Majesty, if his venture—sustained with astonishing pertinacity in highly unfavourable circumstances—ended in fiasco, there is nothing of *opéra bouffe* about his would-be subjects, the Araucanian Indians, whose name for themselves is Mapuché, meaning "the people of the land".

Araucania is the name now somewhat loosely given to a region in southern Chile which extends from the Pacific Ocean to the Argentine frontier (in other words, to the

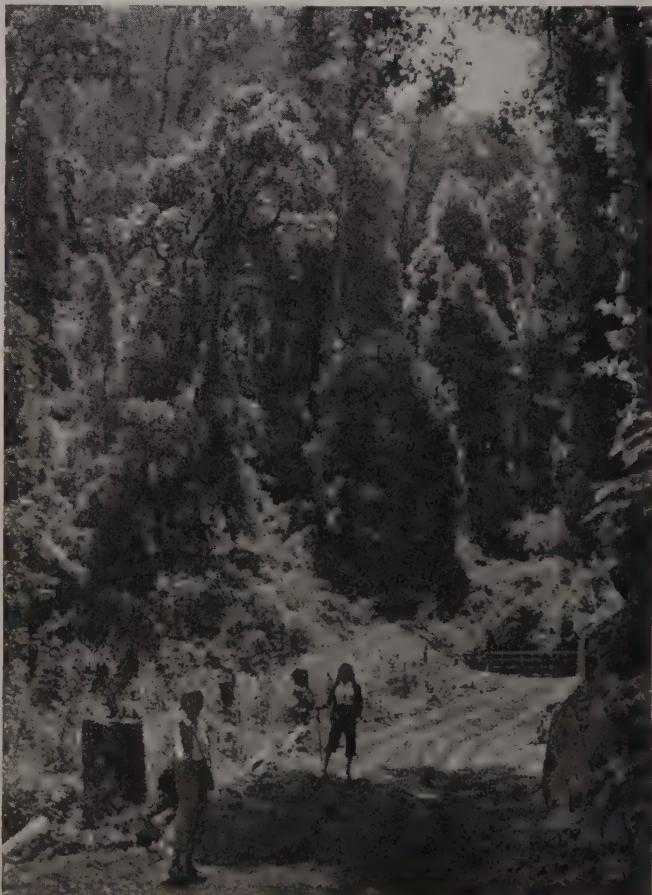
spine of the Cordillera of the Southern Andes) approximately between latitudes 37 and 41 S. More precisely, its northern limit is the river Bío-Bío, and some would prolong it southwards to the Chacao Channel, which separates the mainland from the island of Chiloé. It is a region of mountains, forests, rivers and a cluster of lakes as lovely as those of the Austrian Salzkammergut and in much the same way, except that many of the mountains that frame them are snow-capped volcanic cones.

Its name comes from Arauco—town, Gulf and formerly Department; and Arauco is probably derived from a stream called the Raghco, the Mapuché word for “chalk-water”. Arauco has also given its name to the monkey-puzzle (*Araucaria imbricata*), whose home is near the snow-line of the mountains of northern Araucania, which at that distance from the equator descends to 6000 feet. The simian whose perplexity is presumed in the homely English term for this least welcoming of conifers is, of course, a hypothetical one. No monkey could exist in the monkey - puzzle's Araucanian habitat, whose climate is as sharp and inhospitable as the tree itself. By way of compensation Araucania has bestowed on us another and much more comforting plant in the shape of the large strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*), introduced into Europe by a French naturalist at the beginning of the 18th century. This naturalist was despatched by Louis XIV at the end of his reign on a scientific expedition to South America, and bore what was in the circumstances the singularly appropriate name of Frézier.

The Araucanian Indians or, as we must call them, the Mapuché, are popularly supposed to be the only Amerindian people never to have been conquered. To the extent that this belief refers to the Spanish Conquistadores, there is truth in it, despite the fact that Pedro de Oña published his poem, *Arauco Domado*—“Arauco Subdued”, in Lima in 1596. Forty years earlier the soldier-poet Alonso de Ercilla had written the more famous epic, *La Araucana*, immortalizing the heroism of the Mapuché *tokis*

(war-lords), such as Lautaro and Caupolicán, in their not entirely unsuccessful resistance to the Spaniards. Somewhat illogically these tragic figures (Caupolicán was impaled immediately after his enforced baptism) were to become an inspiration to the Chileans of the early 19th century in their war of independence against Spain. The final liquidation of Mapuché autonomy and their complete absorption into the Chilean State took place only after the collapse of the venture of Orllie de Tounens. It may be mentioned that the first Englishman to see Araucania was the irrepressible Sir Francis Drake—*el draque*, “the dragon”, to his Spanish contemporaries—after he had passed through the Straits of Magellan in his 100-ton *Pelican*, renamed the *Golden Hind*.

The urban centre of the present-day Mapuché is the town of Temuco, capital of the Province of Cautín some 400 miles south of Santiago. No Mapuché live in the town, nor do they even live in villages. They dwell



Cranmer Kenrick

In an Araucanian forest

in their thatched huts (*rucas*) on isolated farms scattered about the *reducciones*, as their reserves are called. There is now not much community life, cohesion or racial organization among the Mapuché, who seldom come together in considerable numbers except on some special occasion, as when they assemble at a *ngillatuhue* ("place of worship") on one of their spacious meadows to pray to their animistic pre-Christian divinities for rain or fine weather. They cannot be said to occupy a particularly honoured place among their fellow-Chileans of European or mainly European descent, and they have therefore acquired an inferiority complex which leads them to be a little ashamed of their own language and so to lose interest in its preservation. That distinguished Chilean diplomatist and man of letters, don Agustín Edwards, for many years his country's representative in London, has called them an "impoverished and broken" people; and as long as the Mapuché feel themselves to be, despite their right of citizenship, a despised community, so long will they find it difficult to recover their self-respect as entitled to display a proper pride of race. Yet so passionately are they attached to their homeland that when sent by the Spaniards in Colonial days into forced labour on the great estates of Peru or in the silver mines of Potosí in Bolivia, they would often starve to death in the coastal desert or drown in the sea in desperate attempts to walk, and even swim, back to the plains and forests of their distant Chilean homes.

The most effective centres of Mapuché life today are the European Missions, such as that of the Anglican South American Missionary Society, whose headquarters are at the little township of Chol-Chol, 22 miles from Temuco. Here, thanks to the kindness and hospitality of the Rev. H. Donaldson, the Superintendent, I was able to see something of the processes that have produced two Anglican priests and a number of teachers of both sexes and trained hospital nurses, all of pure Mapuché blood, to serve their fellow-Mapuché at the various Mission stations. In the backyards of many of the houses of Chol-Chol were hanging, in the course of drying, strips of the horseflesh, which in the form of biltong, is the Mapuché's favourite meat; and only a few miles from the township is the broad piece of land—covered at the time of my visit, which was in winter, with edible mushrooms—that is the *ngillatuhue* of the neighbourhood. At one end of it is the notched pole which is an essential feature of the stock-in-trade of the *machi*, the Mapuché medicine-woman. I had the good fortune

also to see an assembly of *huasos* (cowboys), Mapuché, white and mestizo, competing in a series of matches, garbed in sombreros, *mantas* and enormous spurs and looking like centaurs, so magnificently did they sit their mounts. I use the word 'match' in the technical sense of a race between two competitors, such races continuing one whole afternoon. What is known in Chile as the *manta* is the *poncho* and *ruana* of other parts of South America, a sleeveless garment composed of two pieces of material sewn together and put over the head through a slit in the middle. Some of these *mantas* were quite small and richly coloured, worn straight like a dalmatic and intended for adornment rather than business; others were larger types of an attractive light fawn colour, better able to keep out the cold and the rain.

Cold and rain there were in plenty, and the tracks between Chol-Chol and Temuco at that season were so submerged in mud that even riding was difficult. At one part of the journey I was reduced to travelling by creaking ox-cart at the speed of about two m.p.h., and discovered what it must have felt like to be a Merovingian king touring the provinces in mid-winter.

The northern Araucanian lowlands are a region of rolling downs, not unlike parts of New Zealand but with their own local colour provided by the weeping willows turning yellow and the deep brown of the fields lying fallow. Farther south begins the lake country with its rich woodland vegetation: great wealth of timber including pine, beech and laurel; a delicate climbing bamboo "as flexible", to quote Agustín Edwards, "as a young girl's body"; brightly coloured flowering shrubs, such as the wild fuchsia, and a multitude of berries edible and otherwise; dense undergrowth—the whole illuminated by the handsome Chilean national flower, the *copihue*. This creeper with its large, waxy, winter-flowering, bell-like blooms, both red and white, also grows in Martinique and owes its botanical name *Lapageria* to the Empress Josephine, who introduced it into Europe. Here the swiftly flowing rivers carry the lumber of the forests down to the coast, while the graceful outlines of the volcanoes are reflected like so many Fujiyamas in the steel-blue waters of the innumerable lakes. Never in the Alps have I seen *Alpenglühens* as lovely as that which on one evening in May incarnadined the brilliant snow-clad cone of Lake Panguipulli's volcano, Choshuenco, or that on the slopes of Mount Osorno, which dominates Lake Todos los Santos and Lake Llanquihue, the greatest of them all.



# Street Life in China

## I. Made for the Children

Notes and Photographs by HEDDA MORRISON

*Street-traders are an essential part of Chinese town life, many of them displaying great industry and skill. The old fellow shown above places a tenuous fruit-flavoured toffee-mixture on the end of a tube and, by blowing and a dexterous use of his fingers, produces fascinating edible animals*



The maker of toy whistles is a familiar sight along many streets before the Chinese New Year—a noisy festival when grown-ups use all sorts of crackers and musical instruments, while the children specialize in piercingly shrill whistles gaily striped in pink, purple, red, green and white. The pedlar has stuck his products into a bundle of reeds; these he keeps by him for the sake of their pith, from which he will make a new supply of whistles by and by. For when business slackens—

—Chinese street-traders often settle down and make their wares in the public thoroughfare, much to the delight of all children. (Right) A craftsman who is a familiar figure in the main roads of Peiping in late spring, when he may be seen selling many wonderful animals and assorted objects woven from the flexible reeds which he carries in his basket. In the lower right-hand corner, and hanging to the right above, is the popular 'leaping-frog'—a toy common in North China





The Chinese have enjoyed puppet shows for more than 4000 years. (Originally these were shadow plays, in which parchment figures cast their silhouettes on a screen.) There is an extensive range of material for the puppet master to draw on, much of it based on Chinese classical drama and performed in much the same way as it has been throughout the centuries. The operator, a versatile artist, manipulates up to four figures on the stage at once and speaks with equal facility in men's—

—or women's voices. One of his female characters (right) is the Chinese equivalent of Cinderella; her story—that of a commoner with whom an Emperor fell in love—never fails to move old and young in any audience. The same puppets appear in several of the plays that make up each operator's repertoire, for it is by their traditional costumes (which can be changed after every performance) rather than by their faces that the various characters are known to their admiring public.





A Peiping youngster, one of the fascinated and fascinating spectators of the daily drama of the streets. In his Mongolian felt cap, which is trimmed with red and gold brocade and fur-lined, he provides a good example of the difficulty of portraying a 'typical' Chinese face, for he might well be claimed as Mongolian or Manchu.

# Notes from a Tigris Journal

by ALAN ROSS

THE river stretched out beneath the plane, twisting in mercury flourishes on either side of the wings. The sun burned from an empty blue sky, straight at us, till it seemed that sooner or later the silver, fastidious wings of the Viking must melt. Only the engine pushed away the heat of the sulphurous afternoon; the whole enormous sky centred in its throbbing motors, and the few birds, gulls or vultures, wheeling away beneath us appeared uncertain whether to approach, like hesitant guests hovering at a party.

The desert shimmered; in the distance the sugary buildings of Baghdad grew into a watered stare of mirage from which pylons and water-towers, the pebbled circumferences of mosques, rose from the noose of palm trees. Then only the twist of the Tigris seemed to lead anywhere, following us with elaborate contortions as it wriggled out of the blanketing sand. In patches it almost gave out, uncovering shoals of honey-coloured islands that emerged from the ochre water—down which, though there were none to be seen, men travelled on skins from the upper reaches, a family bearing its chattels weeks long through the aberrations of weather, the sandstorms that suddenly sprang up and blacked out the sky till the whole world on the ground closed in to arm's length, and only the stratosphere was free.

Occasionally, like images from dreams that had suddenly become real, small settlements or ruins materialized. The date-trees of Kadhimaïn, with the Golden Tombs appearing as a filling in their centre, fluttered out of the gravel, an army of waving green, as we flew low over the unpeopled paths. Then, as quickly, the vision faded. One turned round, watching it like a girl's face in a city street, seeing something fresh and arresting at each look, hoping to hold it. But, like sand, it slipped through one's fingers.

I sat reading an early novel of St-Exupéry's, the peach-coloured heat on my face, as we bumped slightly over sand dunes and altered course northwards to Samarra.

The exact circumstances of the legendary Rendezvous with Death, the strange Appointment at Samarra, eluded and worried me as we flew up towards the lost town—though here in the desert it seemed as though every-

thing had died once or was keeping up life only for its final appointment. Somewhere, St-Exupéry writes about how the absolute purity of the sky made him uncomfortable; its 'too-blueness', its perfection became an agent so impersonal that it created an enormous sense of desolation, of emptiness which, though in a way liberating the personality, also destroyed the sense of man's connecting links with the earth. It is the clouds alone that act like magnets and conduct one back into life through their familiar cotton-wool contact—the contact of gloved hands, the earth laid out under a gauze of fleece, elusive but permanent. But in the very intense blue the sky has no corners and no mercy, not even echoes. Space answers space, and, in between, we battle against desert winds like shuttle-cocks, our slip-stream taking us further and further away from what we know.

\* \* \*

Samarra came and went, a blur of stone, and then again sand round the haggard rim of the river stretched away into the deadline of sight. The sun seemed to move over us like a spray.

Soon to the right the oil-wells of Kirkuk became visible, small bubbles blowing themselves up as we approached. The whole oilfield looked functional and perfect, a silver, red and blue metropolis of engines and pipes, contrived as a substitute for flowers. The great aluminium drums flecked like fish scales winked in the sun, and all round there were yellow flat-roofed houses with perfectly laid out gardens, roads flanked with palms, and pink-washed villas glowing in the afternoon light.

Along the pipe-line the two or three fires that burn off the excess gases sent flames candle-high in a hopeless competition with the sun. Then pressing in from all sides, the expressionless blue left no one any room to breathe.

\* \* \*

We arrived at Mosul as the sun began to set. There was a huge, very modern hotel over the railway station, with lounges full of plush chairs and nobody about, polished tables with six-month-old illustrated papers,

the eternal boring, export magazines selling things into space and cluttering up the air with their limp, soiled slogans.

I thought of London dressed up in its bridal, winter weather, my friends' lives like so many neon lights trying to meet somewhere in the darkness and always failing. Here, a world away, one felt acutely one's separateness, one's dispensability; everything must be going on just the same.

Till late in the evening I sat in the lounge trying to make words shape: 'sand', 'blue sky', 'cirrus', 'palm trees', when all day their reality had lain around me, and now the moon was sifting the date-leaves and fingering the cold, unsurrendering walls.

Later I went out for a walk, the old town with its broken, gapped walls heaving itself out from the honeycombed mud dwellings that had grown up all round, and the air full of the scent of oranges.

Small, dim lights burned in the huts and from some of them wailing Arabic songs rent the quiet with their strident, inchoate sexuality—a music of uncomplicated essentials that left nothing to the imagination, and which, when the sound had died away, left its longing and desire trailing the darkness like an echo.

I walked up past the brothels—the biggest comparatively, so they boasted, of any town in Iraq, and outside children sat up screwed into postures of paralysis like dumps of old clothing, holding out their blind hands for any sort of gift, now that God spoke with a voice of money.

You could sense the clusters of eyes staring into the darkness, from the huts that faced on to the road—groups of huddled figures, wrapped up in innumerable *abbas* and goatskins, with the night air running against their skins like braille, and nothing more difficult to balance than the equations of weather. Or was there, here too, the uneasiness of Arabia getting up again like a wind, fanned by unknowable fires?

It was impossible not to feel the hopelessness of the system, the lack of organization, the indifference to individual life that left these illiterate communities struggling for survival—uninformed, derelict, uncared for—till suddenly they became valuable simply as numbers and were moved off to death with a passion roused in them for nothing they knew of—and which again left them alone with the inherited disease of their history. While somewhere else great stretches of land went to waste through the neglect of their absentee owners, and money was only to burn; where great drills sucked out the oil and mechanics

were trained to tend the machines, where everyone was in favour of progress, but where progress meant only a radio in a fast car and a pearl tie-pin.

Nothing happened simultaneously in the history of nations. That was the great tragedy; here everything was too late, was not and never really could be in time with anywhere else. Nationalism, indépendence—these were noteworthy banners, but they meant nothing when they were unrelated to a view of existence. It was not enough to parade in the streets when you couldn't read the words of your own slogans, and that was what was happening. Education untied from power, power untied from enlightenment, goodness isolated from capability.

I watched the river winding under the moonlight out towards Nineveh—isolated buffalo lay embedded in the glittering water, heavily motionless as the tide broke round them. Everywhere there was beauty, decay, exploitation as part of the same process. A solitary dog began to bay, and gradually, like a ball, the signal was passed from one dog to another, till the quiet over the town was broken up into an irritation that went on all night.

\* \* \*

The morning was cloudless, with a pale blue sky in which the smoke from the few chimneys stood up straight in the air and nothing was flowing.

We drove out along a winding road to Nineveh, where the walls of the ancient city were grassed over and only rippled now like muscles in a sea of earth. All that remained were great, giant slabs of concrete with, on one of them, cracked across its girth, an enormous winged bull, and outside it, like a carefully posed juxtaposition of Time Past and Time Present, a tent, stained and patched, with women sitting outside spinning wool, only their hands darting out like fish from their *abbas*. Round them, small black-eyed children stood like stylites at the edge of the water, green wheat and barley, and away in the distance isolated men moved amongst the green stalks. On the skyline, just visible, though no more definite than clouds, the Kurdish hills rose lacy and white over the plains.

Nearer the town, Jonah's mosque spiralled like a lighthouse over sand-coloured houses. Inside, on lush, surrendering carpets, with the smell of sweets and incense moving against the drowning curtain of intoning priests, the paraphernalia of Islam lay shuttered from the bright sky, illuminated by the brightness of its

own mosaics. A whalebone hung up near Jonah's tomb like a testament of truth. Outside, round the precincts of the mosque, groups of Arabs sat about in the dagger-bright sun, playing cards on the pale stone tilings of the terraces. Gambling indeed was the only real, day-in, day-out, entertainment—one saw it everywhere, in the cafés under the soiled, dusty palm trees with the harsh, gangling music wailing out over the ignorant desert, or the roadsides where, huddled like mice, the staring figures gazed at the dice clicking on the pavements; even on the flat roof-tops with their carpets of dung drying out in the sun and wet garments billowing out like sails against flesh. Later, I drove out to some of the small mud villages. These were off all the roads, handfuls of huts completely built of mud and existing for no apparent reason. For miles around there was nothing but scurvy-looking gravel, ridges of stone that trailed down into dried-out wadis, and isolated humps in the ground that were remnants of former encampments, ancient towns gone dead and existing like mummies.

Each village was built like a honeycomb, each 'box' containing a compound bordered with mud walls, the sides roofed over with manure and reeds webbed over poles. In every box the arrangement appeared to be the same—one wall-hut for animals, one for a kitchen and one for the family. The fourth wall was the entrance.

The compounds were scrupulously clean, and the huts carefully arranged with earthenware decorations hung on nails driven into the mud. Inside it was almost completely dark, as there were no windows and only a dull, religious light burning over the piled straw that covered the ground. At night ten or fourteen people lay side by side, three or four generations together in the cowled darkness.

But now there was scarcely anyone to be seen in the compounds—only outside in a communal drive of sunlight old men in innumerable goatskins sat smoking long thin pipes, while the blue flame of a coffee burner was lit and tiny cups of bitter, very concentrated liquid were handed round.

Small children, the sons of sons, scuffled about at their feet, some of them with strikingly pale faces, blue eyes and orangy hair—curious Kurdish throw-backs who might have been seen playing in a London street. They were nearly all illiterate (though schools were in the process of being set up), part of that enormous, amorphous population in whose name and with whose ignorant connivance so much that was against their

interest, was done. The children did not know their ages, but every so often military doctors came round and assessed them—giving them an arbitrary age, which rendered them eligible or ineligible for service. Often, they said, the parents objected to the age at which they were assessed, and lawsuits were begun contesting them. But it was rarely any use—without education they remained, as they always had been, defenceless.

Education, from beginning to end of the country, was their real need—the 'X' quality to which every problem reduced itself, sooner or later. Already the educational progress being made was considerable—only the political corruption, the deadlocks produced by the reinfiltration of religion into administration, held it back.

It was almost sunset when I left to go back into Mosul. A jackal galloped along by the car, and in a pool near the roadside, with cold shadows edging the passionless reflections of sky, gazelles timidly sipped, like nursemaids, at the edge of the water. A string of camels, short-sighted and supercilious, moved out into the desert—part of the great nomadic herds who carried their civilization tiredly, like loads on their backs.

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During the night the wind got up and sand blew against the netted windows. Outside, the round white domes of buildings froze in the statuesque moonlight—there was all of what one thought of as 'the Orient', gathered under the mauve sky, precise and restless. The beauty, of a particular sort, remained, though the romance had gone a thousand and one nights ago. The reality never quite met the imagination, because always the imagination was grounded in history—and what lay all round was not history or legend, but the shabby properties of men and women striving for a living. Apathy, cruelty, disease, a new-born nationalism—yes, there were all these struggling to manage the equation. Perhaps one day it would come out. Perhaps not. In the meantime there was a lot to be thankful for—a country of wonderful sunsets, miracle ground, with, a stone's throw away, the blue hills of Kurdistan iced with snow, and, down river, the date gardens and rice fields, the uneasy civilization of Baghdad, the marsh villages round Basra. An estuary, too, of pelican and crane, stork and swan, white in effortless flight over stiff skirts of green round the river. There were pearls in the gulf of Bahrein, and in the desert, round Kuwait, with its exquisite boats, there was oil—the real secret, for good or for evil, of the future.